



# A HISTORY OF HUNGARY

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*Chapter I*

THE ORIGINS OF THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLE  
AND STATE

## 1. FROM PRIMITIVE SOCIETY TO FEUDALISM

### Ugrian Prehistory

The origin of the Hungarian people is, to this day, a matter of dispute. The most reliable clue is the linguistic evidence that Hungarian is one of the Finno-Ugrian languages. The bulk of its vocabulary, as well as its grammatical structure, is common to all Finno-Ugrian languages, particularly to the eastern, Ugrian branch. The present-day distribution of Finno-Ugrian peoples and the occurrence of words in the Finno-Ugrian languages for botanical and zoological features that can be geographically localized has convinced philologists that the ancestors of these peoples inhabited the area between the middle Volga and the Urals, probably in the neighbourhood of the Kama river. This Finno-Ugrian community eventually split into the Finnish and Ugrian branches. Later the Ugrian branch divided into the present-day Ugrians of the Ob valley—the Voguls and Ostyaks (Man'shi and Chanti)—and into the ancestors of the Hungarians. The division, according to the philologists, took place around 500 B.C. The fact that the Hungarians belong to the Finno-Ugrian family of peoples is indisputable. The exact location of the original Finno-Ugrian homeland, as well as the process leading to the separation of the peoples, is still a matter of controversy. All the theories, however, agree on one point: during the first millennium B.C. the majority of the Finno-Ugrian peoples lived somewhere in the European part of what is today the U.S.S.R. The Ugrians lived further east than the Finns, very probably below the Volga bend and on both banks of the river. This area was still in the belt of deciduous forests but very close to the steppes.

The Finno-Ugrian peoples were already at the time skilled in pottery making, weaving and spinning. They bred livestock and tilled the land with hoes. Influenced by their neighbours, the nomadic pastoral communities of the steppes, the Ugrians learned to breed horses and, around the fifth century B.C., they began to use bronze, and later iron. Primitive agriculture and livestock breeding did not replace hunting and fishing, however, particularly as the forest region abounded in fur-bearing animals.

During the first millennium A.D. the Ugrians' life was gradually transformed by contact with other peoples, such as the nomadic tribes of Iranian origin (Scythians, Sarmatians), who invaded the Pontic steppes. This region bordered on several civilizations: the Greek on the Black Sea coast, the Armenian in the Caucasus, and the Iranian of Khorezm south of Lake Aral. Trade developed between these civilized peoples, particularly the inhabitants of Khorezm, which was the most accessible region, and the Ugrians, with the nomads of the Pontic steppes acting as middlemen. Archaeological finds, as well as words of Iranian origin connected with trade found in the Ugrian languages, reveal that the Ugrian hunters exchanged the furs of the forest animals for the more sophisticated textile, metal and glass products of Khorezm. The fur trade gave the primitive Ugrians their first opportunity of accumulating property, which led to economic divisions within the community. The resulting stratification of society was further accentuated by animal husbandry and agriculture, which were gradually to develop into the chief occupations of the Ugrian peoples.

#### Nomadic Pastoral Society

Not later than the fifth century A.D., the Hungarian branch of the Ugrian peoples, by now separated from their Ugrian kinsmen of the Ob valley, came into close contact with the Bulgar-Turks, nomadic pastoral tribes, who began to move into the region at this time.

The nature of the relationship with these tribes may be inferred from the words of Bulgar-Turkish origin in the Hungarian language and from the fact that ninth-century sources, Byzantine as well as Arabic, invariably refer to the Hungarians as 'a race of Turks'. The large number of Bulgar-Turkish words for the techniques of animal husbandry and dairy farming is evidence that it was under the influence of the Bulgar-Turks that the Hungarians, hitherto hunters, fishermen and stock breeders engaged in marginal land tilling, became a community of predominantly nomadic herdsmen. According to Arabic source (Dzbaibani), the Hungarians 'have tents, and they will move to places where they find fresh grass and lush vegetation'.

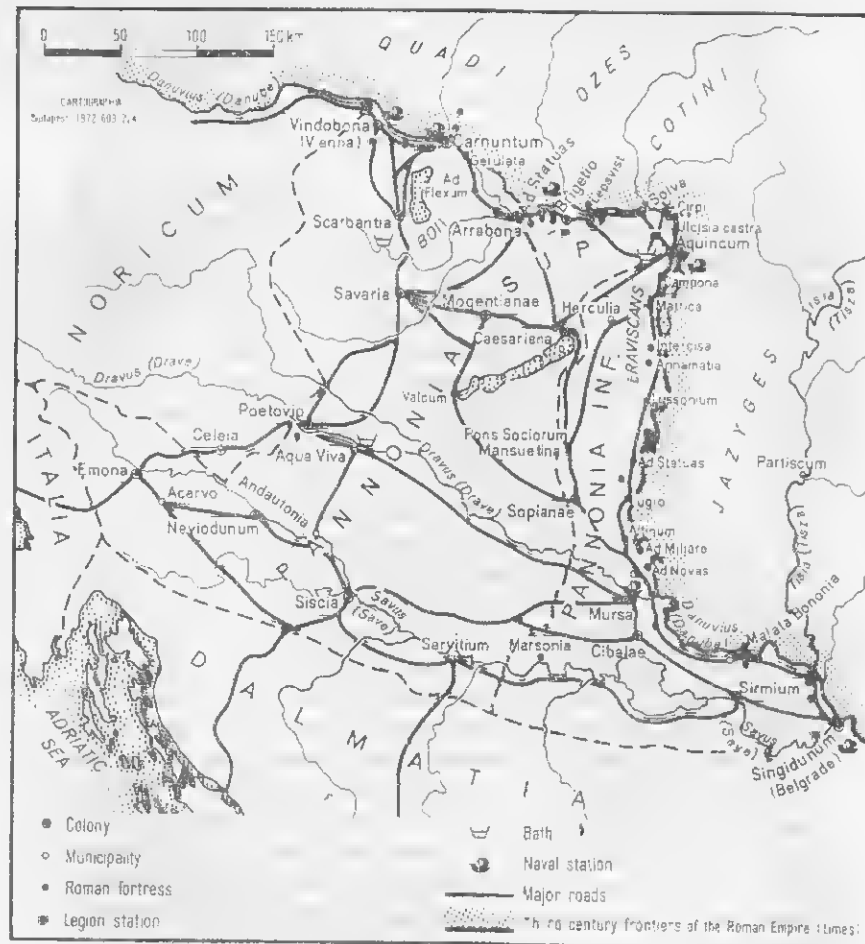
Due to the need for larger grazing lands, the Hungarian-inhabited area now extended to the wooded steppe along the middle reaches of the Volga. Judging from personal and tribal names and the titles of dignitaries, mostly of Turkish origin, the tribal organization of the Hungarians in that region must have developed within the framework of the nomadic empires of the Pontic steppes.

The nucleus of these empires was the armed retinue of a wealthy chieftain. His retainers, recruited both from impoverished members of the clan and from outsiders, enabled him to gain control first over his own clan and then over others, sometimes speaking different languages, until he eventually formed a tribe comprising all the clans he controlled. Finally, he became overlord of a confederation of tribes. A man of rank in the conqueror's retinue was appointed head of each tribe. These tribal chiefs, in their turn, had their own armed retainers who enforced the obedience of the clan leaders. The ruler of the confederation of tribes, or empire, 'the king of kings' (the khagan), sat enthroned above his subjects. He maintained his position with myths concerning his divine origin. He nominated his kinsmen as viceroys over these groups of tribes or 'peoples'. These nomadic empires rose swiftly to power and their disintegration was no less sudden and dramatic.

From the fifth century A.D. onwards, historical evidence proves that the Hungarians were subjects of the successive empires of the Huns, the Avars, the Tu-kines, the Onogur-Bulgars and the Khazars. They were part of the Onogur-Bulgar tribal federation which was formed about the middle of the fifth century, and which during the seventh century constituted an independent, if short-lived, empire. At the end of the century, the federation was reduced to dependence upon the Khazars, who were descendants of Huns, intermingled with Alano-Sarmatian elements. Some of the Onogurs fled before the Khazar conquerors to the lower reaches of the Danube river, where they subsequently established an independent state. Another group of Onogurs founded the Bulgarian state of the Volga region. The name of the disintegrating Onogur federation of tribes was preserved by the Hungarian tribes, which stayed on and came under Khazar rule.

The status of the Hungarians within the Onogur tribal federation and their political organization are not known. But some information is available, from Arabic and Byzantine sources, about their life under Khazar rule. The Khazar conquerors appointed chiefs to head the Hungarian tribes; the foremost of them, the paramount chief or *kende*, was the third highest dignitary in the Khazar imperial hierarchy. The other chiefs, too, held office in a strictly hierarchical order. The *gyula* and *horka* were next to the *kende* in the hierarchy. The names of other office-bearers survived in Hungarian tribal names (e.g. Tarján, Jenő). Each of the chiefs had an armed retinue, recruited from outside the clans. These armed retainers were called *jobbágy*, a term which in later feudal times came to mean 'vassal'.

The leaders of the tribes and clans claimed hereditary rights to



Pannonia in the 2nd century

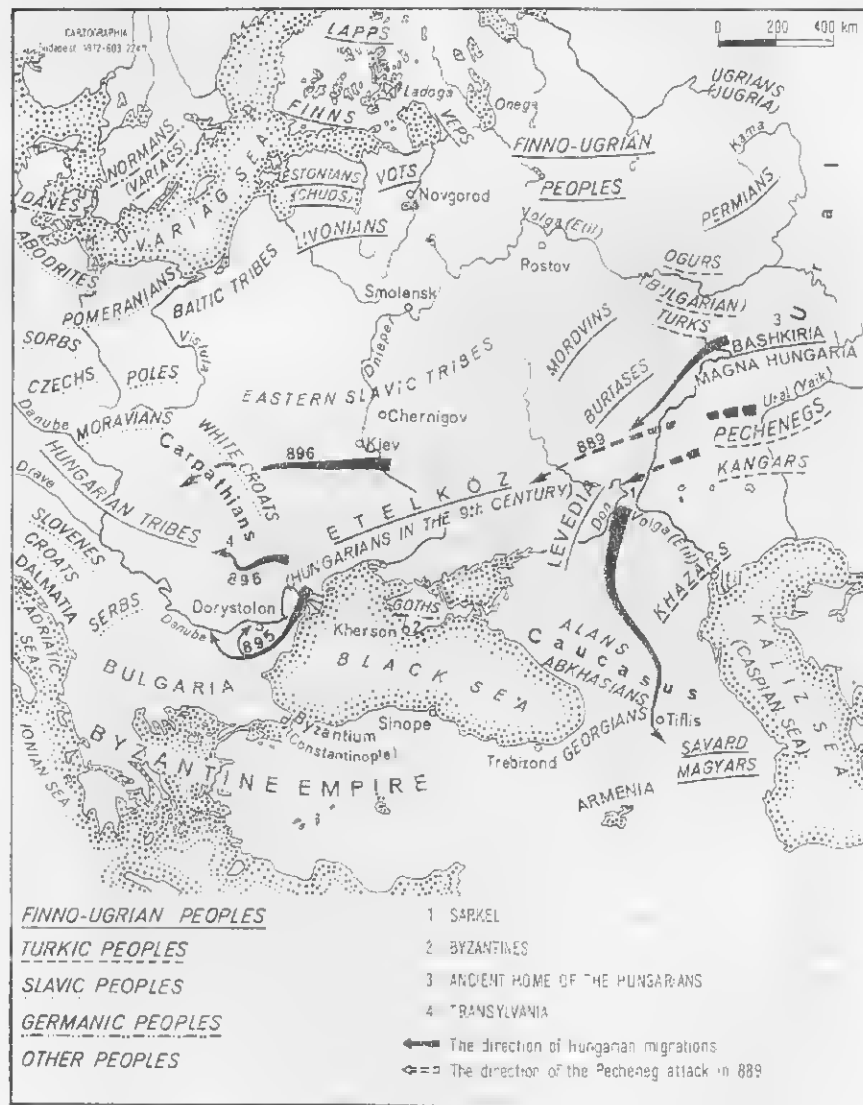
military and judicial offices: hence the beginnings of a hereditary aristocracy. Men of rank recruited into their service poor or impoverished freemen and also made use of slaves, who had been bought or taken captive in war. The internal structure of the clan was thus transformed. In addition to the kinship-based families—of which the clan had previously consisted exclusively—there arose a new type of family: a wealthy one to which blood relations as well as some dependent freemen and slaves or bondsmen belonged (the latter two with a lower status than the kin). This wealthy family became the leader of the clan. Within the framework of the primitive community a division into classes gradually emerged.

### The Hungarian Tribal Federation

In the seventh and eighth centuries the Hungarians' neighbours, the Khazars and the Bulgars of the Volga region, gradually developed agriculture, thus laying the foundations for the transition from the tribal framework to the social and political patterns of feudalism. These changes in neighbouring territories did not fail to make an impact upon the Hungarian community.

The last group of words of Bulgar-Turkish origin incorporated into the Hungarian language are all agricultural terms, including some related to wine growing. The Hungarians' gradual change-over to agriculture is attested, *inter alia*, by Dzshaihani's remark that they 'have plenty of crops'. Their leaders sold furs, exacted as taxes from the peoples of the forest belt, and slaves, brought back from their campaigns, to Arabic and Byzantine traders, from whom they purchased silk fabrics, swords, armour, ornamental vessels, harness and ornaments for their dress. It was noted by Dzshaihani's informant that the latter were worn by Hungarian dignitaries, and many of these objects have been unearthed in tenth-century burial places in present-day Hungary. Although the Hungarians of the steppe remained predominantly nomads and failed to establish towns, there is little doubt that their economy grew stronger and that the disintegration of their old social system continued unabated. They adopted the Turkish runic alphabet and adapted it to their Finno-Ugrian language. With the loosening of the bonds of the clan system, there began the process which ultimately led to the transformation of the federation of seven tribes (Nyék, Megyer, Kürt-Gyarmat, Tarján, Jenő, Kér and Keszi) into a united people calling themselves Magyar or Hungarian.

The leaders of the Hungarians, although of Khazar descent, no



Eastern Europe in the 9th century and the Magyars' road to present-day Hungary

longer had any feeling of community with the Khazar empire, and in the early ninth century they shook off Khazar rule. Once a dignitary of the Khazar khagan, the *kende* now became the paramount chief of the Hungarians. Following the pattern of the dual kingship system that existed in both the Khazar and the Avar empires, he shared his rule with the *gyula*, who was second in rank. Although the Khazar ruling class never accepted the desertion of the Hungarians, the latter repulsed every Khazar attempt to re-establish their overlordship and even counter-attacked to such an extent that around the year 830 the Khazars were compelled to build the fortress of Sarkel in the region between the Don and Volga rivers in order to secure their communications. The Khazars also encouraged the nomadic Pechenegs to attack the Hungarians. This device proved more effective in keeping the Hungarians at bay—although in the end it proved to have been a two-edged weapon as, by enlisting the Pechenegs, the Khazars themselves opened the door to a fresh barbarian invasion, which led to the early destruction of their young steppe civilization. But a Pecheneg attack in 889 dislodged most of the Hungarians from the Volga bend and they moved to the region stretching from the Don to the lower reaches of the Danube.

Conflicting information from the available sources has inspired a variety of theories about the Hungarian migration. There have been attempts to locate Levédia and Etelköz, mentioned in thirteenth-century chronicles as the homelands of the migrating Hungarians at various dates before their conquest of present-day Hungary, at various places between the Volga and the Danube. The territory bordered by the Kuban river and the Caucasus is also believed by some historians to have been a dwelling place of the Hungarians for a while. However, the available evidence on the route that the Hungarians took from the Volga bend does not satisfactorily bear out any of the theories mentioned. All that is certain is that the majority of the Hungarians did not leave the Volga before the second half of the ninth century. Here, on the banks of the Volga, a Hungarian Dominican friar called Julian, on an expedition to the East in the first half of the thirteenth century, found a few Hungarians who had been left behind when the majority began their westward trek.

When the Hungarians had already reached the region of the Dnieper river (the Etelköz or 'land between rivers' of the chronicles), they met with the Slavs and became embroiled in the political struggles over the hegemony of the Middle Danube Basin. The year 892 saw them fighting, in alliance with Arnulf, king of the East Franks, against Prince Svatopluk of Moravia, while in 895, instigated by Byzantium, they

attacked Czar Symeon of Bulgaria but were defeated. The Pechenegs seized this opportunity to occupy the Hungarian settlements along the Dnieper. In the absence of their best warriors the Hungarians were unable to defend themselves, and so, led by their two chiefs, Kurszán, the *kende*, and Árpád, the *gyula*, they moved to the Carpathian Basin which they had come to know during earlier raids.

### The Conquest of the Carpathian Basin

When the Hungarians invaded the Carpathian Basin, they found there no well-established state capable of offering effective resistance. At the end of the eighth century, Charlemagne had crushed the Avars who inhabited this area. The Slavic tribes, now that they were free from Avar domination, began their independent political organization, but these young states were compelled to defend themselves against the expansionist policy of the East Frankish Kingdom. The Slovenian principality which had been established on the territory of the former Frankish margravate, in what is today Western Hungary, had failed to attain independence, while by the later part of the ninth century the Moravian Empire, whose control extended east of the Western Carpathians to the region of Nyitra, was on the point of disintegration, a process accelerated by the Hungarian invasion. The territories east of the Danube came under Bulgarian influence after the collapse of the Avar Empire, but the Bulgarians, who were locked in a struggle with Byzantium, lacked the power to establish effective control over any part of this area. Feudal anarchy was rampant in the East Frankish Kingdom under the last of the Carolingians; thus the Hungarians were able to conquer the Basin quickly and with comparative ease. First they subdued the vicinity of Nyitra, then, after 900, they extended their rule over Pannonia (Western Hungary), and very probably to large areas of Transylvania. Archaeological finds indicate the early arrival of the Hungarians in these areas. In the south, the Hungarians reached the Save-Danube line.

Historical sources available contain no reliable information concerning the details of the Hungarian conquest. The Hungarian chronicles of later periods, drawing on the sagas of the tenth-century war-leaders and somewhat naive etymologies of place names, speak of Moravian and Bulgarian 'dukes' in parts of Hungary which were undoubtedly inhabited by Slavs during the tenth century. Some of these 'dukes' surrendered to the conquerors; others perished in battle and their people were subjected to the rule of the Hungarian leaders.





The Slavs living in the Basin—or at least some of them—practised relatively advanced stock farming and tillage and pursued various handicrafts. Words in Hungarian of Slavic origin dating from this period testify to this. The Slavs also had an advanced social organization. The clan and tribal chiefs (zhupans and voivodes) already formed a ruling class which had subjected part of the population to feudal exploitation and had built strongholds to safeguard its rule. These strongholds were in the centre of the area controlled, and the surrounding lands were tilled by slaves and dependent freemen.

After the conquest, the Hungarian chieftains with their armed retainers and hounds moved into the fortresses of the Slavic zhupans or else they built strongholds of their own. Those Slavic leaders who surrendered to the Hungarians were probably allowed to retain their property but the land of those who resisted passed into the hands of the Hungarian chieftains. These developments quickened the pace of Hungarian feudal evolution. Agriculture, thanks to the influence of the subject Slavs, became an increasingly important sector of the economy on the domains of the Hungarian chieftains, but the free Hungarians of the clans usually remained herdsmen.

Toponymical evidence suggests that the Hungarian conquerors occupied the Carpathian Basin as far as the beech and fir-tree belt, because the forests, lacking undergrowth, offered no grazing for their herds. The Slavs, on the other hand, kept away from the grassy plains and settled in the oak forests of the western and south-western parts of Pannonia and around the Basin, on the wooded slopes of the Carpathians, and they also penetrated the beech forests along the river valleys. The Slavs who did not live in the oak and beech forests were slowly absorbed by the Hungarians after the conquest. Recent research suggests that the number of the Hungarian newcomers was about 400,000, while the indigenous population is estimated at half that number. Until about the mid-twelfth century when the mountainous regions began to be populated, some 200,000 square kilometres (77,200 sq. miles) of the country's area may be assumed to have been inhabited. With a population density of 3 per square kilometre, the Basin was therefore rather sparsely inhabited at that time—this estimate accords with the occupational pattern of the Hungarian community, a pattern characterized by the predominance of stock breeding.

The Hungarians presumably settled in clans and tribal groups. However, as the primary function of the tribe was military, it gradually dwindled in importance and the basic unit in society remained the clan. But the clan had by now ceased to be primarily a community

of free herdsmen descending from a common ancestor. In place of kinship ties, the clan was held together by the wealth of the chief and his family, and by his power to maintain a large retinue containing both slaves and free herdsmen. The majority of the native Slavs, who were engaged in agriculture, were subjected to the Hungarian chieftains, a fact which was decisive in the final transformation of the clan from an organization based on kinship into a social organization based on territory.

The leaders of the tribal federation, the tribal chiefs, were all recruited from 40 or 50 powerful families. About the middle of the tenth century, Constantine Porphyrogenetos describes the Hungarian federation of tribes as a loose association for the purpose of defence against outsiders. Inter-tribal relationships as well as the very structure of tribalism began to lose their importance, as, after the settlement, the most efficient fighting force was no longer the arms-bearing free tribesmen but the armed bands of the most influential chiefs. This process of tribal disintegration was so rapid that not even the names of the tribes were preserved in tradition, and the story of the military adventures of the tenth century was remembered as a series of exploits carried out by some distinguished chiefs and their armed retinues rather than as joint enterprises of some tribes.

#### "De sagittis Hungarorum . . ."

The half century following the conquest offered the Hungarian chieftains unique opportunities for achieving glory and enriching themselves. The anarchy prevalent in the disintegrating Carolingian empire was an open invitation to marauders. The fleet Hungarian horsemen were able to make surprise attacks on villages and cities, sack and burn them before the slowly moving armies of Carolingian armoured knights were ready to move into action against them. The Hungarians developed certain tactics for use in battle. They would make a surprise charge, then turn tail and pretend to flee. When the serried ranks of knights had broken up in pursuit, they would turn about, shower a hail of arrows upon their confused enemies, and slaughter them in hand-to-hand fighting. As early as 899-900, a large Hungarian army ravaged Lombardy for a whole year. During the following decade, the Hungarians attacked Bavaria in order to strengthen their hold on Pannonia and also to extend its western frontiers. During these campaigns, in 904, the *kende* Kurszán fell a victim to a stratagem planned by the Bavarian lords, who invited him to a feast and there murdered

him and his retinue. The death of the *kende* enabled the *gyula*, Árpád, to seize the office of paramount chief. In 907, when the Margrave Luitpold was killed in a battle near the Enns, the Hungarians were able to seize the territory of the defunct Ostmark to the banks of the river. From this base, over the next few years, their mounted bands invaded Germany, often as allies of the Oder and Elbe Slavs in the latter's struggle against their Saxon conquerors. They were helped by Arnulf of Bavaria, who had bought his peace from them and supported their enterprises against his great adversary, Henry I, the Fowler, King of Germany. King Berengar I, too, enlisted the services of the Hungarians to fight against his rivals and several times from 919 to 926 the Hungarians went ravaging and destroying through Italy. By this time, even the German king was reduced to paying annual tribute in return for immunity for his country from the attacks of the Hungarians.

The annual tribute received from the German and Italian rulers, together with the lion's share of the spoils taken in treasure, cattle and slaves on the marauding campaigns, greatly increased the wealth of the chiefs. Some of this booty went to their armed retainers, who made up the bulk of the raiding armies.

According to some historians impoverished herdsmen who had lost their livelihood took part *en masse* in these campaigns, but it is more likely that only those who possessed the necessary horses and arms could afford to join in the campaigns and raids and thus have a chance of getting a share of the booty. The Hungarian warrior was hurried together with his sabre and horse, but in a great number of tenth-century burial places so far excavated no sabres have been found. At this stage of the disintegration of the primitive community system, the abandonment of military duties was the first step along the road to loss of freedom, which was the fate of an increasing number of impoverished Hungarians at this time. Besides the subjected Slavic peasants and the imported slaves, these impoverished Hungarians swelled the ranks of servants who tended the growing herds of the wealthy chiefs and cultivated the latter's farmlands, which were being augmented at the expense of the common land.

However, the once abundant flow of the spoils of war, which further increased the distinctions in wealth amongst the members of the clan and tribe, soon began to dwindle. The need for defence in the face of recurring Hungarian attacks helped to bring to an end the state of anarchy in Germany, which had been the prime factor in making possible the Hungarians' initial successes. Henry the Fowler's policy of strengthening the royal power in Germany bore its first fruit on

the battlefield of Merseburg. Here, in 933, a reorganized army of German knights routed a Hungarian force that was attacking because of German refusal to continue payment of the annual tribute. For years afterwards, the Hungarian chiefs left Germany alone, taking advantage, instead, of Bulgarian-Byzantine tension to plunder the Balkans.

Henry's death, however, was followed by a return to anarchy and Western Europe was again open to attack by the Hungarians. The military campaigns were placed under the command of the *horka* Bulcsu, who for nearly two more decades made the name Hungarian a word of terror. Once again, in the churches of Christendom, terrified congregations repeated the prayer '*De sagittis Hungarorum libera nos Domine*' ('From the arrows of the Hungarians, save us, O Lord'). Hungarian armies crossed the Alps and the Pyrenees. They reached the Atlantic seashore, the Mediterranean coast and the Bosphorus. The Byzantine emperor, as well as the German and Italian princes, now paid annual tribute to the Hungarians to gain immunity from their attacks. The *horka* Bulcsu went to Byzantium in 948 for peace negotiations and was converted to Christianity. He was raised to the status of patrician by the emperor. But the 'man of blood', as his contemporaries referred to him, was denied the chance of becoming a Hungarian Clovis. In 955 he was routed at Augsburg by an army of the German princes under the leadership of Otto I. He was taken prisoner, and hanged along with his fellow commanders. The descendants of Árpád, who still bore the title of paramount chief, although for a while eclipsed by Bulcsu, were destined to lead the Hungarians in the transformation of their society through changes in their social organization and foreign policy.

*Chapter II*

THE INDEPENDENT HUNGARIAN FEUDAL  
MONARCHY TO THE BATTLE OF MOHÁCS  
(1000-1526)

## 1. THE RISE OF FEUDAL HUNGARY

### Conditions during the Transition to Feudalism

The disaster of Augsburg put an end to the marauding campaigns in the West. For the next ten to fifteen years Hungarian raiding parties continued their attacks on the Byzantine Empire in the Balkans, in alliance with Prince Svyatoslav of Kiev. But from 970 onwards their way to the south too was blocked when the Byzantines succeeded in extending their frontiers to the Danube.

The political situation in the territories around the Hungarians now well established in the Carpathian Basin began to change. The power of the Khazars and the Volga Bulgars, already weakened by the attacks of the Pechenegs, was crushed by Svyatoslav's campaigns. The Pontic steppe was once again overrun by warlike nomadic tribes, who threatened the existence of the young Kievan state. The economic and cultural ties that had linked the Hungarians, even after they moved to the Basin, to the Iranian Moslems were finally severed: burial finds dating from after the middle of the tenth century contain no Arab coins (*dirhems*), so frequently found in graves dating from earlier years. This indicates that the Moslem slave traders found little to interest them in this region once the Hungarians slackened off their forays for slaves. The Khazar and Volga Bulgarian towns also began to decay. Volga Bulgars and Khorezmian (*káliz*) refugees and traders as well as clans of nomadic Pechenegs who moved into Hungary were to remind Hungarians for centuries to come of their one-time links with the world of the Pontic steppe. But the future of the Hungarians was to be closely linked with that of their neighbours in the south and the west.

The borders of the Byzantine Empire stretched as far as the Danube. The Holy Roman Empire had succeeded in restoring the Ostmark and, by bringing a Christianized Bohemia and Poland into feudal vassalage, was making its presence felt from the north. The Hungarian leaders realized that they would have to place their relations with their neighbours on a different footing.

The internal development of Hungarian society likewise called for

a political change. The chief of the clan, now well on the way towards becoming a feudal lord, rose to be head of a province and lord over warriors who were bound to him by personal ties. He exacted a variety of services from impoverished freemen and slaves and from independent cultivators who were members of his clan. Relationships based on kinship were thus replaced by a local unit whose centre was the castle inhabited by the chief of the clan.

The increasing power of the clan chiefs further weakened Hungarian tribal organization; it also became the foundation of the new form of government which was evolving inevitably as a result of the development of a feudal state. A struggle for supremacy amongst the tribal chiefs ensued, which was won ultimately by the paramount chief, a descendant of Árpád. This was owing to the consistent policy of expansion initiated by Árpád himself when he seized the opportunity of Kurszán's death to secure for himself and his descendants the office of paramount chief and to take possession of Kurszán's dwelling area (situated in the vicinity of present-day Budapest). Villages named after Árpád's sons and grandsons are evidence that by the middle of the tenth century the lands bordering on the banks of the Danube south of the Danube bend (a little way to the north of the present capital) as well as the eastern and southern parts of Transdanubia (the area lying west of the river) were directly controlled by the paramount chief's family. This probably arose as the result of the practice of appropriating the possessions and offices of commanders and chiefs who were killed in campaigns abroad. The death of Bulcsu and of his fellow commanders brought the western parts of Transdanubia under the paramount chief's authority, and put an end to the other chiefs' control of the middle reaches of the Danube and the area west of the river.

A similar process of expansion was taking place in the East. The *gyula*, second to the paramount chief in the hierarchy of the tribal federation, whose residence was in Transylvania, followed Bulcsu's example by going to Byzantium in 950. He, too, was baptized, receiving the rank of patrician. Greek monks carried through successful missionary work in the land of the *gyula*, a region which as far as can be deduced from the evidence, extended westward as far as the Tisza river, around the middle of the tenth century. The federation of Hungarian tribes therefore, centred as it was around two seats of power, was on the point of pulling apart. This may be the reason for the practice, traceable to nomadic Turkish tradition, of distinguishing between 'white Hungarians' and 'black Hungarians'—terms used in

German and Russian records dating from the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries to distinguish between western and eastern Hungarians.

### The Struggle for Power by Géza and Stephen

Géza (970–997) continued the expansionist policy of his ancestors, with its tendency to disrupt the tribal organization. He compelled the clan chiefs, by now independent heads of provinces and mostly related to him, to recognize his overlordship. A ruthless, iron-handed ruler, he brought them to heel; he appropriated for himself two-thirds of the territory controlled by them, and more if they put up resistance. He placed his own officials (called *ispán*, meaning sheriff or count, derived from the Slavic *zhupan*) in their castles and settled the area around them with warriors from various tribes (called *jobbágy*, *iobagiones* in Latin). According to a chronicler, this ruler, who was ruthless towards his own people, but generous towards strangers, found only meagre support among the Hungarian tribal aristocracy for his efforts to organize a feudal state. The majority of clan chiefs naturally clung to their independence and only yielded to force. For this reason, the hard core of Géza's armed force consisted of a band of retainers, whose members were recruited abroad. At first, these were Russian warriors, but in later years Géza relied more and more on German and Italian knights.

With their assistance, Géza made use of the experience gained elsewhere in organizing a feudal state. He sought to establish even closer ties with his feudal neighbours. In 973, he sent an embassy to the Emperor Otto I, offering him an alliance and asking him to send missionaries into Hungary. He thought that conversion to Christianity would strengthen the new social order and government. Moreover, this move would demonstrate to his neighbours his determination to discontinue his people's earlier aggressive foreign policy and his desire for peace. He hoped thereby to head off a probable German attack. It was a natural course of action for Géza to seek to establish contact with the German emperor, since his rival, the *gyula*, was allied to Byzantium. The missionaries did arrive, but they made slow progress in their work, for the paramount chief, although he and his family were baptized, still tolerated paganism. In this respect, as in others, he did no more than prepare the ground for the transformation of his country. In the same way he took only the initial steps towards reducing the Hungarian tribes of the east to submission by taking

a wife from the family of the *gyula* of Transylvania and by marrying one of his daughters to a tribal chief of the Upper Tisza region, a chief who owed no allegiance to the *gyula*. He was the first Hungarian ruler to carry his dynastic policy beyond his borders: his three other daughters were married to the doge of Venice, a prince of Poland and the son of the Czar of Bulgaria. For his son Vajk, who was baptized Stephen, he sued for the hand of Princess Gisela of Bavaria.

Stephen received his education from Adalbert, Bishop of Prague, who lived briefly in Hungary, and from Adalbert's disciples who settled there and founded the local ecclesiastical organization.

The Hungarian chiefs, who resented Géza's policies and clung to paganism and the old order, supported Koppány's succession to the throne. Koppány, who ruled over the possessions of Árpád's family south of Lake Balaton, was the eldest male member of the family, and his accession would have been in keeping with the old nomadic order of succession. Stephen sent his German knights to subdue his ambitious kinsman. Koppány was killed in battle, his body was quartered, and the victorious young prince caused parts of it to be nailed to the gates of three castles in the west of the country as a warning to those who opposed his rule. He sent the fourth quarter to his uncle, the *gyula*, in Transylvania. Stephen, having consolidated his power by force, wanted the sanction of a royal crown. Tradition has it that on Christmas Day in the year 1000, with the consent of the Emperor Otto III, he was crowned king of Hungary, with a crown received from the pope.

Kingship involved the claim to rule over the whole of the Hungarian federation of tribes, including 'Black' Hungary. The assertion of such a claim was made easier by the fact that the *gyula* of Transylvania no longer completely controlled the eastern parts of the country. In the southern part of the region east of the Tisza, on the banks of the Maros, a powerful clan chief, Ajtony, had established his rule. He was the lord of a castle built on the site where the town of Csanád was later built. He relied on the power of the Bulgars, then temporarily in the ascendant in the Balkans. He had invited Christian monks from Vidin to his lands but he himself persisted in his heathen faith and polygamous ways.

Stephen, securing the alliance of Byzantium, which had for many years been locked in a life-and-death struggle with the Bulgarians, cut off the *gyula* of Transylvania from his only possible supporter, thereby forcing the *gyula* to recognize him as his superior. He then launched an attack upon Ajtony. Ajtony was killed in the ensuing battle, and his province was annexed to the Kingdom of Hungary. His clan, like the

descendants of earlier rivals of the Árpáds, carried on as lords over a modest region that comprised but a few villages. A German monk, writing about 1006, recorded the event: 'King Stephen of Hungary attacked Black Hungary with his forces and, with coercion, intimidation and charity, was pleased to convert that entire land to the true faith.' Thus the feudal Kingdom of Hungary was established and comprised all the Hungarian tribes and clans. An attack launched by the Czar of Bulgaria was defeated by Stephen in alliance with Byzantium and the war was carried into Bulgarian territory. This campaign helped to hasten the eclipse of the Bulgarian state.

### The Organization of State and Church under Stephen

The land formerly controlled by the clan chiefs had already become royal domain as the result of the expropriations started by the paramount chief Géza. Stephen continued and completed the organizing work begun by his father: he turned the regions inhabited by the clans into the basic administrative unit of royal power, i.e. the *megye* or county. Two-thirds of the county's population of freemen, villeins and slaves were placed, along with the area they inhabited, under direct royal authority. The population of Hungarian and Slavic freemen were divided into companies of tens and hundreds, under the command of *jobbágy*s, that is, the vassals of the king. Part of this population was employed by the *ispáns* (sheriffs or counts) now installed in command of the castles formerly owned by the clan chiefs, for services in and about the castle. Another section of the population was put to work under the charge of *udvarispáns* (stewards of the royal household) serving to provision the royal household. Grants from the crown lands were made to bishoprics and monasteries which were founded in large numbers, and to high-ranking members of the king's armed retinue. When these grants of land were added to properties taken earlier into private ownership, large feudal estates were formed. The owners of these estates formed the feudal ruling class whose members were bound to give military service and allegiance to their sovereign. In the beginning, the lands held by the lords were dwarfed by those of the king and the Church; they received, however, princely remuneration from the royal revenues in return for their services as *ispáns*.

The laws and institutions of the feudal state thus ensured for the royal power that degree of concentration of forces, economic as well as military, without which the young Hungarian state would never

have been able to develop the fabric of feudal class rule or resist its neighbours' territorial ambitions.

The king's efforts to consolidate law and order and to secure his frontiers, found an ideological justification in the concept of the Christian feudal kingdom. The Hungarian heathen world of beliefs had been rooted in the social conditions of tribal society, and, together with the epic poems eulogizing the exploits of military leaders whose very names struck terror in the hearts of people throughout Christendom, helped to preserve an outlook that was diametrically opposed to the new social and political order. King Stephen did not shrink from taking ruthless measures to spread Christianity, whose doctrines preached obedience to feudal superiors and favoured a settled way of life based on agriculture rather than a nomadic pastoral life. Although the influence of native Slavic Christianity, as well as the work of Byzantine and, later on, Bavarian missionaries had paved the way for the massive conversion of the Hungarians, pagan resistance was still very strong. Those who in the process of feudal transformation had been deprived of their power or of their freedom demonstrated their protest by clinging to old beliefs. However, the leaders of the resistance were punished with a savagery that was meant to serve as a deterrent: for instance, Tanuzaba, a Pecheneg clan chief, was buried alive. The *ispáns* sent soldiers to drive the people *en masse* to christening ceremonies. Royal ordinances obliged the people to build churches, provide for the sustenance of priests, attend divine services regularly, and pay tithes. The king made grants of land to the ever-increasing number of bishoprics and Benedictine monasteries, and built and furnished their churches.

The clergy and monks, whose ranks were soon swollen by local recruits, spread the culture of feudal Europe all over Hungary. The first ecclesiastical schools were founded. Gerard (Gellért) of Venice, tutor of King Stephen's son and, subsequently, Bishop of Csanád, was a noted ecclesiastical author of his time. Nor did the Hungarian ruling class, in these early years, ignore the Greek culture of Byzantium. The old Basilian monasteries of the eastern parts of the country were permitted to carry on their work undisturbed until the latinization of the thirteenth century. What is more, kings, even at later dates, founded monasteries of the Eastern rite for their Byzantine or Russian queens. The first was founded by King Stephen himself, on the occasion of his son's marriage to a Byzantine princess. Thus, the schism between Western and Eastern Christianity, which was deepening at this period, was not reflected in Hungary until many years later.

## 2. THE EARLY PERIOD OF FEUDALISM (11th AND 12th CENTURIES)

The main characteristics of the first two centuries of feudalism in Hungary were the same as those found in other European countries at that stage of development. They were a subsistence economy based on agriculture; the absence of towns and towns artisans; only limited and mainly local trade; survivals of slavery among serfs farming with tools owned by the feudal lord; and, lastly, the predominance of crown lands (together with ecclesiastical lands, which were closely bound up with the king's domain) over other feudal holdings.

### Extensive Farming

Stock breeding, a legacy of the nomadic past, continued to be the Hungarians' chief source of livelihood, although crop growing made steady advances. Foreign travellers, even as late as the twelfth century, described the country as one vast grazing-ground broken only by scattered patches of cultivated land. However, stock breeding had by now become closely linked with agriculture. The fields, dressed with manure, were cultivated until the soil was exhausted. When this happened another area of pasture would be tilled. The population shifted its quarters as the ploughs moved on to other parts of the land. This system of agriculture is dependent on an abundance of land being available for farming and on huge stocks of animals. Millet was a major crop at first, although both wheat and barley, which had been known to the Hungarians in the Pontic steppe, were increasingly cultivated.

The plough had also been used in the steppe, and had since been adapted to local conditions by modelling it on that used by the native Slavic population. The Slavic names of some parts of the plough are evidence of this. The plough was usually drawn by a team of eight oxen. These were little, small-horned, thin-horned beasts, and, judging from the evidence of bone finds, they belonged to the breed indigenous to Central Europe. Horses, huge stocks of which were bred, had on



the other hand been brought in from the steppe. They were not employed for ploughing and were used only to draw wagons or for riding, but their meat was eaten. They were still a small breed in the tenth century, but by the eleventh century attained the height of the European thoroughbred horses. There were also large stocks of sheep and swine.

The level of farming was above average on the lord's demesne (the *telek*, Latin *praedium*). On this farm, a permanent area was marked off for agriculture. It was divided into two parts, which were grazed and ploughed alternately, but the change was not made each year and exhausted land was grazed for several years until it had regained its fertility. This was a step towards the time when stock breeding would become subordinate to crop farming. The centre of the lord's demesne was the manor-house (the 'court'); all around it were fields, which were worked by slaves (*servi*) with close-cropped hair, using the lord's plough and oxen. The more remote farms belonging to the lord were worked by semi-free slaves (*liberti*), who were attached to the lord. They were obliged to deliver a part (usually two-thirds) of their crops to their lord. In the same way, the slaves who tended the lord's vineyards were permitted to work on their own. The harvested crop was stacked in the fields and there the grain was threshed by the trampling of stock animals. Guibert, a French abbot travelling with an army of crusaders through Hungary, admired the tower-high stacks of grain along the Danube, containing the harvests of several years. The peasant hand-mill of early times was gradually replaced by watermills, which were mentioned in records as early as the middle of the eleventh century as appurtenances of manors.

### Slaves, Serfs, Freeman

In essence, this system of farming corresponded to the one, then in a state of disintegration in the West, under which slaves settled on the land gradually became serfs. However, in Hungary as elsewhere, their slave origin was never forgotten. They had no right of ownership over the land they tilled or the animals they tended, and their lord was free to move them elsewhere, if he so desired. They were bought and sold together with their farm implements and draught animals, and were not allowed to leave their lord. Their condition of servitude did not change even if they were required to perform some special service, such as carting, fishing or working at a craft, instead of tilling the land.

Their services became considerably less oppressive as a result of a

gradual fusion with the class of freemen. The latter lived in villages which, as a result of the administrative division of the country into counties, became royal domain and were subsequently enfeoffed to lords spiritual or temporal, or which were formed by communities of free settlers on land in feudal tenure.

The freemen (*liberi*, the *vulgares* of King Stephen's laws), by now forming a clearly distinct class, held shares in common fields but were required to perform various services for the king or for their lord. Their status as freemen, which distinguished them from slaves and serfs, rested on the fact that no services could be exacted from them other than those agreed upon with their lord. Freeman were employed, as a rule, as overseers of slaves and serfs, mounted messengers or as wagoners, and were required to deliver to the lord a fixed quantity, instead of a percentage, of their crops.

The lords distorted the freeman's right to leave his holding by driving off their land any freemen who refused to undertake 'voluntarily' to perform the services they demanded, however oppressive. Legal sentences and unpaid debts also reduced numerous freemen to servitude. In spite of these hardships, a large number of communities of free peasants survived on both royal and baronial or ecclesiastical lands. Their freedom was protected by the king, who exacted military service from them or made it possible for them to commute their liability to military service into money payments.

The holdings from which freemen had been driven, sometimes entire villages, were added to the lord's domain. Sometimes serfs were settled amongst freemen, and attempts were made to extend the services required of them to the freemen. Mostly, however, it was the serfs who were assimilated by the freemen as the steady advance of agriculture, the improvement of its techniques, and the growth of population meant that the lord's manor became more and more obsolete.

Menials of county castles and manors serving the provision of the royal household were better off than other classes of common folk. The *jobbágy*s, originally armed retainers, were mostly bailiffs, stewards or other lower-ranking officers, and were freemen. In time, some of these acquired free holdings. The more lowly castle servants (*cives*, *castrenses*), who were bound to the royal court, lived in village communities. The vastness of the estates belonging to the castles and the court made possible an extensive differentiation of services. Certain families, often entire villages, were assigned special tasks. The inhabitants of one village worked as wagoners, those of another engaged in fishing, other again pursued bee-keeping for the king. Certain villages were required to provide food, or wine, or products of domestic



crafts. There were villages whose inhabitants were obliged to serve in turn at regular intervals in castles or royal households as cooks, bakers, stablemen, hunters, messengers, watchmen, armour-bearers and other house-servants. This system of domestic service evolved on the estates of the Árpád family during the first half of the tenth century and subsequently became universally adopted in the organization of county castles. Some of the inhabitants of the villages attached to the county castles, however, were only obliged to give military service. These services and dues devolved from father to son and were from time to time recorded in registers, a practice which gave these people far-reaching protection against a lowering of their status and conditions.

### Handicrafts and Market Places

There was no place for towns in the economic and social system of early feudalism. With the primitive farming methods current at the time, agriculture could not produce sufficient surpluses to support a class of full-time craftsmen. In general, towns could not develop because comparatively large areas of land could only support a few people. Even members of the ruling class were unable to keep their personal servants, such as cooks and armour-bearers, under their roofs all the time, since the latter, if concentrated in a small area, would have found it impossible to make a living by their chief occupation of farming. The lords' solution was to summon their servants from their distant homes for periodic spells of service. Difficulties of transport restricted the movement of farm produce to the lord and those around him from the place where it was grown. Supplying food for the large royal household was particularly difficult, so eleventh and twelfth-century monarchs used to spend only part of the year at their favourite residences (Esztergom and Székesfehérvár). For the rest of the year, they and their household would stay at country houses (courts) on their domains, or they would pitch their tents on the crown lands and consume the food and drink that had been collected from the neighbouring villages.

The vast majority of the population lived on food they produced themselves. None but the ruling class could afford imported goods, such as spices and fine cloths. These commodities were imported by foreign merchants. Goods were traded at fairs. Although coins had been minted ever since the days of Stephen, cattle were still the principal means of payment during the eleventh century. Market-places were

designated by royal decree, for the king provided for their protection and took customs revenue from them. As a rule, fairs were held at important crossroads, often uninhabited places.

A number of foreign merchants settled in Hungary at this time. In the tenth century, some Volga Bulgars settled at Pest and, later on, Walloons and Italians (both called 'Latins') near the royal residences at Esztergom and Székesfehérvár. The business activity of these merchants was confined to meeting the needs of the ruling class for luxury goods, and this alone, in the absence of a class of artisans, could not lead to the growth of towns.

The first stimulus leading to the development of handicrafts separate from the peasant economy came from the system of deliveries on royal and church lands. Under the system of organization followed on the king's domain (similar to the practice evolved in neighbouring Bohemia and Poland), specific handicraft services and mining were exacted from certain villages (or from certain families of craftsmen in those villages). These services were continued from father to son. Contemporary records tell of the existence in the tenth to twelfth centuries of communities of royal or church iron-founders, blacksmiths, armourers, potters, wood-turners, carpenters, tanners, spinners and weavers. The name of various trades and tools leads us to believe that, in the early days at least, the majority of craftsmen serfs came from the native Slavic population. As the Slavs became absorbed into the Hungarian population, the techniques of peasant crafts spread. The remains of a perpendicular treadle-loom, for instance, were found in two weaving cottages during the excavations of the ruins of a twelfth-century Hungarian village along the Tisza river.

By the middle of the eleventh century, therefore, Hungarian pastoral society had become assimilated in essentials to the feudal societies of contemporary Central Europe, inasmuch as primitive agriculture and handicrafts, occupations complementary to the all-important stock breeding, had been improved through contact with the local Slavic (and, in part, Western European) skills. These more advanced techniques received a powerful stimulus for continued specialization by the division of services practised on crown and church lands.

For the time being, however, this development, which represented an outstanding improvement over the productive forces of pastoral society, was not yet considerable enough to strain the framework of a natural economy. The feudal state was capable of maintaining public order and defending itself only by concentrating its meagre surplus, and by binding the bulk of rural manpower to the castles and the royal domains.

### The German Attack and the Domestic Crisis

After a long period of peace which facilitated the consolidation of the young feudal state of Hungary, it became apparent towards the close of the reign of King Stephen that the Holy Roman Empire, after bringing Bohemia and Poland into vassalage, was planning to extend its suzerainty over Hungary. An attack launched in 1030 by Conrad II, however, ended in a crushing defeat for the emperor, who was even compelled to cede part of the Ostmark to the king of Hungary.

The last years of Stephen's reign were made difficult for him by the problem of succession. After the untimely death of his only son, Emeric, his nephew, Vászoly, was in a position to lay claim to the throne. But Vászoly became the leader of those Hungarian lords who resented Stephen's strong rule and were jealous of the king's foreign knights. They plotted to overthrow the king but failed. Vászoly received a horrible punishment for his part in the conspiracy: he was blinded and had molten lead poured into his ears. His sons, still minors, fled to Polish and Russian territories.

Stephen designated Peter Orseolo, the son born of the marriage of his sister and the doge of Venice, as his successor. On Stephen's death, in 1038, Peter's accession to the throne proceeded smoothly. The events which had preceded his accession, however, made Peter suspicious of the Hungarian lords, and for this reason he filled his entourage with Germans and Italians. Among the leading members of his household guard were two English princes, Edmund and Edward, the banished sons of Edmund Ironside; in all probability this is the first documented instance of a Hungarian-English connection. The constant influx of foreign knights contributed to the strengthening of feudalism in Hungary on the one hand, but on the other created tension between the native and foreign elements of the ruling class. This time it was King Stephen's brother-in-law, Samuel Aba, who assumed leadership of the malcontents: in 1041, he drove out Peter and had himself crowned king of Hungary. Peter fled to the Emperor Henry III, who considered the factional struggles in Hungary an excellent opportunity for intervention. The fear of a German attack made some of the Hungarian lords pause and consider, but Samuel Aba carried out bloody reprisals on those whose loyalty to him wavered. He sought to win the support of the freemen, who resented feudal subjection by promising to release them from feudal services. This move encouraged the adherents of the old pagan ways, until then reluctant to rise in open revolt. Many dispossessed clan chiefs and freemen, who had been reduced to conditions of servitude, united by their

hatred of the Christian Church and by their resentment of the dominance of foreigners, joined Aba. The feudal lords, Hungarians as well as foreigners, became alarmed at the mass proportion this movement began to assume. They deserted Samuel Aba, and he was routed in 1044 by the Emperor and assassinated in flight. Peter reoccupied the throne and took an oath of fealty to Henry III. The king and lords, however, weakened by conflict and with their ranks decimated by feuds, were not strong enough to prevent the outbreak of a pagan uprising.

This rebellion was organized and led by Vata, one of the dispossessed clan chiefs of Black Hungary. After the ransacking and burning of Christian churches and the massacre of priests (one of the victims was Bishop Gerard [Gellért], who was later canonized), the rebels turned against the Christian feudal lords. The lords, much afraid, left Peter to his fate and appealed to the Árpád princes, Vászoly's exiled sons, for support. Andrew was living in Kiev, where he had married a daughter of Yaroslav the Wise; Béla had married a Polish princess, while Levente, the third son, persisted in his pagan faith. Vata and his associates also pinned their hopes on the Árpád princes, and offered them their support against Peter in return for permission to exterminate the priests and foreigners and a pledge that tithes and feudal taxes would be abolished and the pagan faith restored. The princes returned to Hungary at the head of a Russian force but were careful not to commit themselves before Peter was decisively routed. However, after Peter was overthrown, Andrew proclaimed himself king (1046–1060), and then proceeded to crush the Vata uprising and consolidate feudalism. He also fought himself out of German vassalage. Henry III made two attempts to assert his suzerainty by force, but the attacks were repelled thanks to Prince Béla's military ability and to the efficient system of castles.

These events were recorded in the *Gesta Ungarorum*, the first history of Hungary, written by an anonymous monk. Although this chronicle is not extant, it has been possible to piece it together, owing to the fact that it was incorporated in several other chronicles written at later dates. The author of the *Gesta*, who is deeply contemptuous of the pagan, nomadic past of the Hungarians, eulogizes unreservedly King Stephen's work as founder of the Christian Kingdom of Hungary, and is full of hatred for the German expansionist ambitions which aimed to destroy the independence of the Hungarian state. German-Hungarian tension was reflected even in Hungary's spiritual and cultural life. Andrew I, in his effort to repair the serious damage inflicted upon the Hungarian Church by the pagan revolt, ignored the nearby German

provinces, which ought to have been the most obvious source of assistance, and enlisted instead the co-operation of the French-speaking clergy of distant Lorraine, a province that had been causing Henry III serious problems through its disobedience. Direct Lotharingian influence can be seen in the beginnings of manuscript illumination in Hungary and in the final form of the liturgy of the Hungarian Church. Monastery libraries came to be filled with manuscripts from Lorraine.

Andrew I, continuing in the tradition of the nomadic past, or, perhaps, adopting the practice followed by the Slavic princes of Eastern Europe, shared his rule with his younger brother, Béla, and ceded part of the country to him along with the right of succession. After a son had been born to him, however, he changed his mind and wanted to secure the throne for his heir, Salomon. This led to an armed conflict, and in the battle Andrew was mortally wounded. Salomon sought refuge with his brother-in-law, the Emperor Henry IV. This dynastic feud provided an opportunity for the outbreak of a fresh pagan rebellion, under the leadership of Vata's son, János, who had been baptized only for appearances' sake. A vast multitude of people assembled for the occasion of Béla's enthronement and the old demands of fifteen years before were voiced once again. But the rising failed to find any response among the ruling class: according to the chronicler's record, only 'villeins and servants' joined the pagan leader. The pagan ideology was now merely a cloak for spontaneous protest against oppression, and the king's soldiers had no difficulty in dispersing the poorly armed rebels. In this the last flare-up of pagan resistance there was already a flicker of the fire of the peasant revolts of later centuries.

#### The Investiture Struggle and Expansion in the Balkans

The accession of Béla I (1060–1063) led to fresh fears of a German attack, but the outbreak of war was averted by the sudden death of the king, which made possible the peaceful return of Salomon from exile. Béla's sons, Géza and Ladislav, were invested with their father's principedom by way of compensation, an act which led inevitably to the resumption of the dynastic feud. The struggle between Salomon and his cousins, however, took place against the background of a totally new international situation—the investiture struggle—with which it inevitably became interwoven. In 1074, King Salomon was defeated and fled to Henry IV. Prince Géza, on the other hand, appealed to the Pope for assistance. Pope Gregory VII saw this as an auspicious oc-

casional for the reduction of Hungary to papal vassalage. He hoped for the same success as he had recently achieved with the Norman principality in southern Italy and the Kingdom of Croatia. Thus referring to an alleged offer of homage by King Stephen (an offer which had, in effect, never been made), he promised the victorious Prince Géza that he would recognize his title to the crown in return for Géza's acceptance of papal suzerainty. But Géza thought the loss of independence too great a price to pay for papal recognition, and he had himself crowned king with a crown that had been sent him by the Emperor of Byzantium.

After Henry IV had done penance to Pope Gregory at Canossa, Germany was torn by internal strife, and as far as Hungary was concerned the menace of a German attack was removed. Thus Géza's successor, Ladislav I (1077–1095), was able to make up his own mind as to which faction it was in his interest to join in the great struggle. At first he favoured an alliance with the Pope as he was interested in weakening the power of the Emperor, who was claiming the allegiance of Hungary. Ladislav, a deeply religious man, in order to enhance the prestige of the kingship and of the Church, obtained from the Holy See the canonization of King Stephen and of his son Emeric, and was himself revered as a saint shortly after his death. However, in developing his foreign policy, he was guided by political interests rather than religious feelings; and as soon as his interests came into conflict with papal policies, he changed sides without a moment's hesitation. This change was due to the Croatian question.

During the latter half of the eleventh century, Croatia was torn by internal strife. The mountain tribes rose to assert their independence from the feudal kingdom that had been established in the economically more developed maritime provinces. In this conflict, the king relied on the support of the wealthy merchant cities of the coastal region: Zara, Trau, Spalato and the smaller towns of Dalmatia. Although these were the last remaining islands of Roman civilization in the Balkans, where Slavic influence was rapidly increasing, they tended to offer their allegiance to the Kingdom of Croatia rather than to Venice, whose monopolistic trade policies threatened their very existence. In 1075, Venice conquered the towns of Dalmatia; and in order to recover them, King Zvonimir of Croatia was compelled, in 1076, to place his country under papal suzerainty. Following his death, in 1089, the Croatian lords invited King Ladislav I of Hungary, brother of the widowed queen, to extend his power to Croatia and Dalmatia by right of inheritance. Ladislav accepted the invitation and occupied Slavonia, the northern part of Croatia stretching as far as the Kapela

mountain range. In 1091, he extended his power over the rest of Croatia and Dalmatia. For the next three hundred years, Hungary was embroiled in a succession of wars and campaigns for the possession of Dalmatia and in related Balkan problems which became of prime importance in Hungarian foreign policy.

Hungary's conquest of Croatia and Dalmatia incurred the hostility of Byzantium and Venice, and, as a result, Ladislas soon lost the towns of Dalmatia. It also marred his relations with Pope Urban II, who energetically pursued the investiture struggle, and refused to agree to Ladislas's occupation of Croatia on grounds of inheritance: he wanted to confer it on him as a vacant papal fief. But Ladislas would not accept such limitation of his power, and so recognized the anti-pope Clement III. Ladislas was succeeded by the ecclesiastically-minded Koloman (1095-1116), and Urban took the first step towards reconciliation, as he realized that, rather than obtaining a forced oath of fealty, it would be to his advantage to have the king of Hungary as an ally by helping him to conquer Dalmatia. An alliance to serve this end was concluded with the Norman prince of Sicily, and cemented by Koloman's marriage to a Norman princess. By the time the bride arrived on the Dalmatian coast, in 1097, the Hungarian army had captured the greater part of Dalmatia in a surprise attack, and only the cities still remained under Venetian rule.

At this time Venice was occupied with the First Crusade: she was busy providing sea transport for the crusader forces and organizing her eastern trade. Byzantium, also, became involved in wars that were to go on for centuries with the newly established crusader states. Hungary was affected by the Crusade as unruly armies made their way across the country, but Koloman was more than compensated for the damage they did by the fact that he had a free hand in Croatia. In 1102, he obtained homage from the maritime regions and, in 1105, from the towns of Dalmatia. He appointed a *bán* or viceroy at the head of each of the three provinces of Slavonia, Croatia and Dalmatia, and introduced into these territories a pattern of local government based on counties. His title of King of Croatia and Dalmatia was also recognized by the Pope. The Dalmatian cities on their own initiative invited Koloman to protect them from Venice, and for the next three hundred years they remained loyal to the king of Hungary. The pro-Venetian and pro-Byzantine factions remained minorities all this time and only managed to seize power briefly on a few occasions by relying on external armed assistance. Koloman's successor, Stephen II (1116-1131), lost Dalmatia for a decade, but Béla II (1131-1141) reconquered it and Zara alone remained under Venetian rule. Hungary's frontiers in

the Balkans were extended during this period by the annexation of Bosnia and Serbia. These territories were also organized into districts under the rule of a *bán*.

#### Hungarian-Byzantine Rivalry in the Balkans

Hungary maintained relations that were, on the whole, peaceful with the Slavic states on her northern border, that is to say the principalities of Bohemia, Poland and Russia. Marriages between members of the ruling houses were frequent and helped to strengthen the ties between the states. Kinsmen would come to one another's assistance in the course of the frequent struggles for the thrones; thus, Béla I and his sons received assistance from the Polish princes, while successive kings of Hungary intervened in the struggles among the Russian princes. In the eleventh century marauding raids of nomadic peoples, the Pechenegs and the Cumans, presented a temporary menace. This menace was, however, averted finally by Ladislas I, whose legendary campaigns appealed to popular imagination and generated a whole cycle of sagas.

The fresh outbreak of the struggle between the Pope and the Emperor which occurred about the middle of the twelfth century put Hungary in a difficult position. This time she was faced with a threat, not from Germany, but from Byzantium, which was enjoying a temporary revival under the Emperor Manuel I. Manuel was determined to recapture the Balkan provinces, which Byzantium had lost to the kings of Hungary. He even hoped to extend his influence over Hungary itself in order to safeguard Byzantine hegemony in the Balkans. Faced with this threat, Géza II (1141-1162) wanted to secure as his ally against Byzantium the Emperor Frederick I (Barbarossa), but the clash in 1159 between Frederick and Pope Alexander III faced him with a difficult choice. His alignment was ultimately decided by the influence of the head of the Hungarian clergy, Archbishop Lucas of Esztergom.

Archbishop Lucas had brought home from the University of Paris ideas of a universal papal power. On his return to Hungary, he spared no effort to keep the Hungarian Church, and through it the whole country, in obedience to the Pope. From the Church's point of view there were good reasons for his policy. During the twelfth century the power and influence of the great temporal lords greatly increased. They sought to extend their possessions at the expense of the crown and church lands. Koloman had already made a law for the recovery of alienated royal estates. The clergy saw that they would only be able

to retain their traditional property and political influence if the royal power was strengthened at the expense of the temporal lords, and if this was accompanied by an increase in papal influence which would force the king to respect the interests of the Church. This policy found a gifted and determined supporter in the person of Archbishop Lucas. Géza II's eventual decision to recognize Alexander III as the legitimate pope, and, if need be, to back him by military force against Frederick, was taken under the influence of his arguments. Hungarian assistance stood the papal faction in good stead; but as the latter failed to make recompense for such assistance, Hungary was left to her own devices in her struggle with the Emperor Manuel.

The Emperor, after the death of Géza II, was able to foment factional strife in Hungary by encouraging pretenders to the throne. Géza's successor, Stephen III (1162-1172), was not yet of age and the country's forces were paralysed. After securing the co-operation of Venice, the Emperor occupied Dalmatia, Croatia, Sirmium, a province between the Danube and the Save rivers, and the provinces of Bosnia and Serbia. Resistance was organized by Archbishop Lucas, but the danger of Byzantine conquest was not averted until 1171, when Venice, having quarrelled with Manuel, began to subject the cities of Dalmatia to her own rule. The defeat of Manuel's ambitious designs put an end to Byzantine hegemony in the Balkans. Venice and Hungary were preparing, in rivalry with each other, to take her place in the peninsula. Manuel had to content himself with having Prince Béla of Hungary, the heir apparent, living at his court. He designated Béla as his successor, hoping to attain by this expedient his stubbornly pursued objective: the incorporation of Hungary in the Byzantine Empire. However, a son was born to him in the meantime, and in 1172 he gave Béla leave to return to his native land, as in the spring of the same year Stephen III died, and an embassy came from Hungary to take the new king home to be crowned.

Béla III (1172-1196) did not serve Byzantine policies. He gained the backing of the Pope and the Hungarian clergy, put an end to factional strife, and managed to win the loyalty of the ruling class. In 1180, on Manuel's death, he recaptured Croatia and the Dalmatian cities. The city of Zara took this opportunity to shake off Venetian rule and put itself under the protection of the king of Hungary, which it greatly desired. In 1182, Sirmium, Bosnia and Serbia came, once again, under Hungarian rule. In 1188, Béla III, taking advantage of the internal disputes of the Russian principalities, occupied Halicz and continued to hold it for some time. His campaigns of conquest in territories within the zone of influence of the Eastern Church coincided with the ex-

pansionist policies of the Papacy, then at the zenith of its power, and here, as in his domestic policies, Béla made clever use of papal support. The early feudal monarchy appeared to have attained the height of its internal and external power under Béla III. In reality, however, internal stability was by now undermined and territorial expansion served merely as a safety valve, albeit a temporary one, for tensions generated by the domestic crisis.



### 3. DISINTEGRATION OF THE EARLY FEUDAL SYSTEM (1196-1241)

During the second half of the twelfth century, the secular element of the Hungarian ruling class was becoming increasingly discontented with the existing arrangement under which, as *ispáns* (counts) or castle officials, they drew only indirect benefit from the concentration of peasant manpower and feudal property within the system of castles and royal estates. Like feudal lords throughout Europe, they wanted to become fief holders and the seigneurs of the serfs settled on the lands whose management was entrusted to them. The king's ability to resist these desires was undermined by the failure of the economic and military organization of the castles and crown lands to keep up with the development of the country. Consequently, they failed to continue to provide an adequate basis for royal power.

The slow process, which, by the middle of the thirteenth century, culminated in the disintegration of the castle system and of the royal estates, and in a complete reorganization of the social structure of their population, was set in motion by the development of agriculture, handicrafts and commerce.

#### The Development of Agriculture, Handicrafts and Commerce

During the twelfth century, the area of agricultural land increased. Little-used woodlands and marshy areas were now converted into arable land; and more valuable cereals, such as wheat, rye, barley and oats, were gaining ground at the expense of millet. These advances were made possible by the widespread use of heavy ploughs, drawn by teams of eight to ten oxen, that were suited to tilling hard soils. Owing to the growing need for draught animals, cattle breeding caught up with, then outstripped, the formerly predominant horse breeding. This resulted in a considerable improvement in the fertility of the soil due to increased use of manure. This was one of several conditions that made possible the introduction on the villages' common lands,

through the serfs settled on the land, of the same system of crop-pasture rotation as that used on the lord's demesne. Wine growing, presumably of Roman origin in the country west of the Danube (Transdanubia), spread to areas north and east of the river. In the wine-producing districts of Tokaj, Eger and Nagyvárad, which became so famous in later years, viticulture was established by French settlers.

The surplus population began to spread out from earlier centres to other parts of the country. They were joined by immigrants—mainly French and German settlers (*hospites*) from the Rbineland—in introducing new technique. The wooded, hilly border regions were settled and were organized into counties. The population of these regions to the north and east consisted of Slovaks, German immigrants, Ruthenian and Rumanian shepherds (the last two groups are first mentioned in thirteenth-century records). The ruling class of the areas inhabited by non-Hungarians was formed of Hungarian feudal lords enfeoffed from royal lands, free Hungarian soldiers and local leaders rising into the land-holding ruling class. About the turn of the thirteenth century, the inhabited area of Hungary was about 220,000 square kilometres (85,000 sq. miles), and the total population was around two millions, giving a population density of 9 per sq. km.

By now the rural population was producing large enough surpluses to leave substantial margins for the market after meeting the deliveries due to the lord. These surpluses were exchanged for handicrafts. Peasants possessing the skills for making commodities such as iron implements, carts, saddles and pottery, all of which were much sought after, became separated from the farming population. Villages whose population had long before begun to discharge their obligations for service in handicrafts were at a distinct advantage. They were the centres where different crafts gradually evolved; they became settlements of craftsmen specializing in one particular product. These early craftsmen did not, of course, detach themselves from agriculture altogether; they only devoted part of their working hours to handicrafts.

Other centres of the emergent class of craftsmen were found in the royal, episcopal and county residences, where craftsmen supplying the upper stratum of the ruling class with certain simple products were able to trade their own handicrafts in exchange for other goods they needed. In notes on their travels made by Arabic merchants who visited Hungary about the middle of the twelfth century, several county seats are described as populous towns in whose markets slaves, cereals, animals and domestic handicrafts, as well as imported goods, were on sale. In a report that was discovered recently, an Arab merchant named Abu Hamid likened the 'towns' of Hungary to Baghdad and

Isfahan—obviously implying a busy centre of local trade. From these documents, from the striking increase in the number of fairs held in places other than county seats, and from the increasing importance of money in the economy, it would appear that the division of labour between agriculture and craft industry had already begun in the course of the twelfth century, and that the preliminary conditions for urban development were ripening. The same Abu Hamid writes of the mining of precious metals in Hungary. Evidence of its rising output is shown in the growing improvement of the standard of coinage and the substantial royal revenues from money exchange. During the second half of the twelfth century, this revenue nearly equalled in value the entire income from the royal lands.

### The Decline of the Castle System

The organization of the royal household and court became an increasingly complex task. The Royal Council became a permanent institution, and the duties of its members became clearly defined; new offices were also created. The *nádorispán* (*comes Palatinus*) or Count Palatine advanced his position from the head of the royal household to the king's deputy in juridical and military matters. His successor, the *udvarbíró* (*comes curiae*) or Steward of the Royal Household, was, in his turn, soon invested with juridical duties. The Lord Chief Treasurer, Master of the Horse, Cupbearer to the King and Warden of the Butteries—the officers in charge of running the royal household—delegated the strictly administrative duties to some of their attendants, while they acted as political advisers to the king. The highest court dignitaries, the *ispáns*, the *báns* (viceroys) of Slavonia, Croatia, Dalmatia, Bosnia and Serbia, the voivode of Transylvania, as well as the Archbishops of Esztergom and Kalocsa and the bishops constituted the body that governed the country—a body which, owing to the social background of its members, represented the interests of the large land-owning class at least as whole-heartedly as those of the king. In 1181, Béla III made it obligatory for administrative matters to be put in writing and, in 1185, set up the Chancery, the office which took care of the official records.

The royal household, enlarged and increasing in pomp and splendour, now demanded more refined articles than the crude products of the peasant-craftsmen living on the crown lands, and required services more skilful than the clumsy bustling of peasant servants taking weekly turns at the court under socage. Imported luxury articles and a per-

manent household staff of servants made the continuance of whole groups of services unnecessary. Owing to the hereditary nature of these services, however, the number of families (and even villages) whose members were obliged to perform duties by now outdated or redundant—such as cooks, scuttle-men and armour-bearers—or to supply products the royal household no longer needed, had greatly increased.

The castle force of armed peasants was of little use in campaigns of conquest. What the king now needed for his wars were professional men-at-arms rather than these peasant soldiers, and Koloman did, indeed, oblige the big landlords to muster such men. However, his successors could not rely on such baronial private armies, as there had been a precedent, in the early twelfth century, of such private forces refusing to obey the king's orders. Gradually, armed men quit the castle forces and enrolled directly in the king's own armed following, the so-called royal *servientes*, which came to constitute the nucleus of the royal army. These soldiers, because of the high cost of knightly weapons and the difficulty of handling them, could not possibly continue to live the life of peasant soldiers and in practice became the lords of the castle bondsmen who were assigned to provide for their maintenance. The officers of the castle force also quietly turned the lands they held into fiefs, either driving away or reducing to serfdom the freemen living there.

The widespread growth of a class of minor feudal landowners meant that large areas of land and many people were no longer under the king's direct seignorial authority. Despite the resulting decline in the royal revenues, the *ispáns* carved an ever larger share of these revenues to provide for their own maintenance as well as that of the castle organizations under them, that is, to swell their own power.

Meanwhile, on the large estates, secular as well as ecclesiastical, the process was completed which fused slaves and freemen into a homogeneous class of serfs, who were obliged to work and to make payments in kind to their lords. At the same time, the amounts of produce due were increased. A similar process took place on the small feudal holdings that came into being on castle and crown lands, while the castle and crown lands proper, where the traditional services were preserved, yielded low incomes compared with the properties in ecclesiastic or secular tenure. Here, payments in kind were not required for the simple reason that the royal household did not need large quantities of produce. The royal household officials sought to obtain, even from the serfs living on the royal demesne, payments of money in place of farm produce, which was difficult to market, or the products of domestic crafts. As this endeavour, owing to the limited development of

trade, was bound to produce unsatisfactory results, they strove to increase other cash revenues. An inventory of Béla III's revenues may safely be accepted as reliable with regard to the breakdown of the various items. According to this, only half of the royal revenues came from the counties and the crown lands (and only a third of this was paid in cash); the other half was accounted for by minting profits, customs duties and tolls, the mining monopolies and the taxes paid in cash by the royal *hospites*. For the central power, therefore, direct control of landed property had ceased to be the only—and even the principal—source of revenue. This made it all the easier for the king to give large areas of his demesne to the land-hungry barons and lesser lords as soon as they felt strong enough to demand more than small grants of land and launched a concerted attack aimed at the destruction of the castle system and royal estates.

#### Alienation of the Royal Estates

The fate of the castle system and royal estates was of interest to the Church as well. If the crown lands were to pass into the hands of the barons, the Church would be unable to acquire any more possessions. Moreover, the land-hungry temporal lords might then be encouraged to lay claim to church lands as well. But even more was at stake—the status of the Church as a political force. The Hungarian clergy made desperate efforts to assert their interests amid the economic and social changes taking place, and in these efforts they were able to rely on assistance from the papal power, then at its zenith. The two empires—the Holy Roman Empire and Byzantium—had declined, and the rise of England and France was only just beginning. In this period of transition, the papacy was the dominant political authority in Europe. The papal writ ran in Hungary; and if the kings did not always prove readily submissive, they were careful to express their objections in none but the humblest way.

Béla III's sons' struggle over the succession provided the Pope with a welcome opportunity to intervene in Hungary. Prince Andrew misappropriated the fund his father had left for a crusade by using it for financing an army against his elder brother, King Emeric (1196–1204). In 1198, he conquered the provinces of Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia and Serbia and organized them into a principality. His supporters began plotting in an attempt to secure for him the crown of Hungary. But the king dealt with the plotters in good time; Bishop Boleszló of Vác, who handled the rebels' correspondence and funds,

was dragged from the altar of his cathedral and sent into captivity. Then the king confronted Andrew's army, which was moving against him, and routed it in the summer of 1199. The brothers were reconciled, but Andrew's adherents paid the penalty for their part in the conspiracy. The rebellious prelates were divested of their office by the Pope, and so were the secular lords. In exchange for support from the Pope, Emeric took up the cross; but before setting out for the Holy Land, he was directed by a papal command to the Balkans, in a campaign against the Bogomil heretics.

While Emeric was busying himself in Bosnia on the Pope's behalf, French crusaders, at the instigation of the doge, captured Zara in 1202; then, in 1204, they took Byzantium and founded the Latin Empire of Constantinople. This scandalous miscarriage of the Fourth Crusade threw cold water on Emeric's zeal. Although the crusaders, threatened by the Pope, did evacuate Zara, a Venetian garrison stayed in the town until 1204. Before the fate of Zara was settled, Emeric could not possibly think of leaving for the Holy Land, especially as Andrew had once again taken up arms against him. In 1203 the two brothers met on the banks of the Drave. The king walked into the rebel camp, unarmed, to take his younger brother into captivity. Peace, however, was not restored, and only his untimely death saved Emeric from further bitter disappointment.

Andrew II's reign (1205–1235) was in part taken up with a stubborn but hopeless effort to secure the Russian principality of Halicz. This campaign, costly both in human lives and money, ended in utter failure, yielding him nothing but the hollow title of King of Galicia and Lodomeria. Andrew embarked upon another senseless adventure when, in 1217, after much procrastination, he resigned himself to accepting the leadership of the crusade which the Pope had been pressing with dogged persistence. Even now it was not the desire to recapture Jerusalem for Christianity which fired him with enthusiasm, but the vacant throne of the Latin Empire of Constantinople. He planned to win the Pope's goodwill by first leading a crusade to the Holy Land; but because of the ineffective way he conducted the campaign he incurred the displeasure of the Holy See, which slighted him by elevating first his father-in-law, Pierre de Courtenay, then the latter's son, Robert, to the imperial throne. The enterprise consumed huge amounts of money and also led to the loss of Zara, for Andrew was compelled to cede the town to Venice in return for the naval transport provided by the Venetians for his army. Disheartened, he returned at the end of 1218 to Hungary, where he found the situation chaotic.

The struggle for the succession between Emeric and Andrew, and



their campaigns, led to the collapse of the castle system and royal demesne, already undermined from within. At first huge portions of land, later on whole counties were given as fiefs to office-holding barons and their relatives. These lords sought to introduce on their newly acquired fiefs those more exacting forms of exploitation which had been evolved on baronial demesnes—an innovation that was fiercely resisted by the peasants of the former crown lands, who clung to the traditional services. The king's knights or *servientes* and the officers of the castle forces, too, sought to ensure their established rights in the face of the new fief-holders, who were trying to incorporate them in their own armed retinue. Seething revolt spread to the population of the large estates of the Church and of temporal lords alike. The courts were flooded with lawsuits to define rights; but even though a plaintiff might be able to make a good case for himself he found it difficult to enforce his right in the face of the mighty barons. Baronial factions fought one another over the disintegrating royal demesne. In 1213, during one of Andrew's Halyz campaigns, Queen Gertrude herself fell victim to a conspiracy of the ousted palatine, the *bán Bánk*, and his followers. The king dared not even punish the majority of the culprits, so firmly was he in the power of the rising oligarchy.

### Social Struggles. The 'Golden Bull'

The king's economic policies, intended to make up for the loss of the crown lands, did nothing but make the existing muddle still worse. Andrew II levied emergency taxes; as he was anxious to raise money quickly, he passed over the feudal financial machinery—too clumsy for the royal court's needs—and adopted the practice of farming out minting and taxes, customs and mines to Moslem and Jewish moneylenders, who recovered their capital with interest from the population. This prelude to the introduction of a money economy permitted plenty of abuse and, under conditions of an emerging, undeveloped commodity economy, imposed on the tax-payers a greater burden than they could bear. The landlords also protested at the taxes imposed upon the population of their estates, which siphoned off money on which they themselves could otherwise have laid their hands. The clergy, while they hastened to adjust themselves to the new conditions of the time by insisting on tithes being paid in cash, protested at the salt monopoly—until recently the Church's privilege—being farmed out to moneylenders.

Open resistance was started by the *servientes* and the officers of the

castle forces. Like the great barons, they too claimed areas of the disintegrating crown lands for themselves, oppressing the peasants they subjected; nevertheless they, like their peasants, were interested in slowing down the rapid disintegration of the old order and in curbing the great lords' lust for land. For this reason, confident of popular support, and relying on countrywide discontent, they started a movement in defence of their threatened liberties. Their movement was taken advantage of by a group of disgruntled barons to further their own plans for seizing power. As a result of the action of this group, Andrew had to issue an edict in 1222—known from the gold seal appended to it as the Golden Bull—under which the *servientes* were exempted from taxation and assured protection against harassment from the great lords. Apart from these articles, the 'Golden Bull' furthered the barons' effort to curtail the powers of king and Church. It extended the powers of the Count Palatine and accorded the 'nobles' (i.e. the barons) the right of armed resistance, should the king break his pledges. The edict banned the collection of tithes in cash and set a ceiling on the amount of money the Church could make through its salt monopoly.

The clergy were shocked at such a show of submissiveness on the part of the king and at once became alarmed at the mass movement. The Pope and the Hungarian prelates wanted to have a king who was tough in his dealings with the lay lords but obedient to the Church. They thought they had found such a monarch in the heir apparent, Prince Béla, who had already been invested with the title of 'junior king' and was known to be dissatisfied with his father's policies.

Prince Béla was convinced by his ecclesiastical advisers of the importance of bolstering the royal power, recovering the lost crown lands and, also, taking back the leases which had been granted on various taxes. His advisers hoped thus to be able to oust the great lay lords, who had grown rich on royal grants of land, and the Moslem and Jewish moneylenders, who had acquired leases and other commercial benefits, and so recapture their former position of strength. With the help of the Pope they prevailed upon Andrew to issue, in 1231, a revised version of the 'Golden Bull', from which the clauses the Church had found prejudicial to its interests were omitted. Included in it, however, was a provision under which the jurisdiction of church courts was extended to cover certain types of lay lawsuits. Furthermore, the resistance clause of the original edict was deleted and replaced by another one threatening excommunication of the king by the Archbishop of Esztergom for any breach of the terms of the agreement.

At the beginning of 1232, Archbishop Robert, with the authorization

of the Pope, did in fact excommunicate Andrew for the latter's continued employment of Moslem and Jewish moneylenders and for restricting the Church's salt monopoly. The king was compelled to conclude with the Pope's envoy the Treaty of Bereg, in which he conceded the demands of the Church.

The Hungarian clergy, under the protection of the papacy, managed to retain their power—at least for the time being—during the great social upheavals of this period.

### **The Invasion of the Mongols**

Béla IV succeeded to the throne in 1235 and reigned until 1270. His life was one stubborn yet unsuccessful struggle to restore and preserve the royal authority in an age when economic and social development had already undermined the traditional basis of central power while a new basis had not yet been formed. Nearly a century had yet to pass before such a development took place; by then commodity production and a money economy would advance sufficiently for taxes, customs and other revenues to make up for the loss of income from the crown lands, and for armed retinues of lords loyal to the king to replace the soldiers from the castles. But in this period of transition, Béla IV saw no other solution to his difficulties than the restoration of the former economic basis of royal power. He set up commissions charged with the task of revising grants of land and recovering alienated castle and crown lands. In an attempt to curb the oligarchy, he went as far as to remove the chairs from the royal council hall and burned them to prevent the leading dignitaries from sitting down in his presence. His efforts to recover the crown lands, however, met with universal resistance. They not only failed to produce the desired result, but also poisoned relations between the king and the majority of the ruling class—the grave consequences of which became evident during the ensuing Mongol invasion.

In 1237, the Mongols attacked the Cuman tribes, which inhabited the area between the Dnieper and Dniester rivers. Some of the Cumans led by their King Kötöny fled westwards and asked for permission to enter Hungary. Béla IV marked out a district in the region between the Danube and the Tisza for them, in the hope that the Cuman warriors would be loyal to him in his struggle with the barons. However, the Cuman herdsmen soon clashed with the neighbouring farmers, as their herds trampled over the crops. The resulting animosity provided food for agitation and the barons were quick to turn it to good advan-

tage in their struggle against the king. They clamoured for the expulsion of the Cumans in order to remove the mainstay of the monarchy. The king, however, was increasingly reluctant to let the Cumans be expelled as he had received fresh news of the approach of the Mongols.

A few years before, a Dominican friar named Julian had travelled east to find the Hungarians who had stayed in the ancient homeland. He did, indeed, find them along the Volga river; but when he set out for a second time to make contact with them, he learnt that Mongol hordes were advancing west. Soon the news that Kiev had fallen reached Hungary. A Mongol invasion of Hungary looked imminent.

At the last moment, Béla lost even the Cumans; a mob, incited by the barons, murdered King Kötöny, and the Cumans left Hungary for the Balkans, killing and ravaging on their way. A large number of barons looked on indifferently, even with hostility, at the king's efforts to rally resistance when the Mongol hordes reached the frontiers of Hungary. Apart from the prelates, only a few barons led their soldiers to the king's standard.

The Mongols entered Hungary at three points in the spring of 1241. From the north came hordes that had ravaged Poland and Silesia, another army advanced from the direction of Transylvania; while the main body of the Mongol force, led by Batu Khan, entered from the north-east, through the Verecke Pass, where the Hungarian horsemen had come many years before on their western migration. King Béla made an attempt to halt the enemy at Mohi, on the banks of the Sajó, a tributary of the Tisza, but was routed and fled westwards, crossing the Danube into Western Hungary and from there on to Austria, to Duke Frederick of Babenberg. Frederick, however, took him prisoner and released him only for a large ransom. Fleeing his Mongol pursuers, the king finally found refuge on the Dalmatian coast, on the offshore island of Trau.

Only a few castles were able to put up a successful resistance and the whole of the country east of the Danube fell to the Mongols. The invaders, of course, slew those who attempted resistance; but, in order to intimidate the population, they went further than that and massacred defenceless people. No one was able to save himself except those who had hidden in good time in the forests or marshes or fled to the hills. Here, their numbers were decimated by starvation. As the Mongols had failed to take Hungary in a single assault, they were compelled to stop and to make preparations for the winter and for the conquest of the country west of the Danube. Survivors were, therefore, lured out of their hiding-places through promises of immunity so that they would work to produce the supply of food needed by the invaders.

But when the harvest was over, the unfortunate folk were ruthlessly massacred or taken into captivity by the Mongols, who were careful not to leave potential enemies in their rear when they resumed their westward march. Crossing the frozen Danube, they invaded Transdanubia. Here, however, they found themselves faced with better organized resistance. They did not bother to break it by mustering their superior force, since their main objective was the capture of the king. This they failed to do before their withdrawal from Hungary in the summer of 1242. The reason for their sudden departure was probably the Mongol practice of contenting themselves with terrorizing the population of a country during their first visit, and leaving the final conquest to a later date. In this case, however, that final conquest never took place, owing to the disintegration of the Mongol Empire.

The Mongol invasion inflicted on Hungary serious losses in terms of human lives as well as material resources. It dealt an even heavier blow to the castle system and the royal estates, bringing nearer their inevitable disintegration. The defeat sustained by the royal army was also a defeat for the king's policies; in this acute crisis of a devastated country, Béla was forced to reconcile himself to sharing his land and power with the barons.

### The Dawn of Chivalry

Some signs of the growing self-assurance and increasing demands of the great landowners became apparent about the turn of the thirteenth century even in the sphere of culture. In earlier years, art and literature had been confined to the royal court and the Church. The earliest monasteries founded and built by baronial families date from the middle of the twelfth century; the monarchy continued to lead the way in architecture even to the end of the century: the most significant pieces of contemporary architecture—the cathedral and the royal palace at Esztergom—were built by French architects for Béla III.

French influence in Hungary reached its highest point during this period. Béla III married twice and both his queens were French princesses, who brought with them their knights, priests and architects from France, while growing numbers of Hungarian students went to Paris to study at the university. Graduates of the University of Paris became clerks who staffed the Chancery.

One of the notaries of the royal chancery was 'Magister P.' (commonly referred to as Anonymus), a historian who was not content to write a mere continuation of the eleventh-century *Gesta Ungarorum*,

bringing it up to date, but brushed it aside and proceeded to write a fresh History of Hungary. He made no secret of his aim to write a *genealogia nobilium* which he set in the story of the Conquest of the new homeland by the Hungarians. His work embodied a wholly novel approach. Unlike earlier writers of Hungarian history, he rehabilitated the pagan past and, by drawing liberally on popular epics and sagas, glorified the tenth-century ancestors of the baronial families of his time, stressing emphatically that they had acquired their properties by force of arms. In an attempt to justify the efforts of the aristocracy of the late twelfth century to confine the power of the king, he traced kingship back to a decision taken by the nomadic tribes to elect a prince and not to King Stephen's triumphal subduing of the tribal chiefs. By writing a History of the Trojan War, a story much favoured by French chivalry, 'Magister P.' catered to the budding literary interest evinced by the upper stratum of the contemporary ruling class. He may also have been the author of a romance of Alexander the Great, parts of which exist in the body of Hungarian letters of later years. Both stories were thus available in Hungarian translations, and their influence can be seen by the popularity in Hungarian baronial families of the early thirteenth century of such classical first names as Achilles, Priam, Hector, Helen and Alexander. The earliest record of vernacular sacred literature—a funeral oration—also dates from this period.

Vernacular literature and a secular outlook were new to Hungarian culture; both of them were connected with the cultural and political aspirations of the secular lords. The literary education of the Western European age of chivalry also began to exert an influence upon the upper stratum of the Hungarian ruling class. Two Provençal troubadours—Peire Vidal and Gaucelm Faidit—turned up in King Emeric's court, and Andrew II was accompanied on his crusade by two eminent German minnesingers, Neidhart von Reuenthal and Tannhäuser. About this time, too, King Ladislas I began to be regarded as an embodiment of chivalric ideals, and Béla III pressed for his canonization.

For some years during the first half of the thirteenth century, the secular lords set the trend in the field of architecture. The finest pieces of Late Romanesque architecture in Hungary, already showing some elements of Gothic, are the family monasteries of some of the great feudal lords—in particular those of Ják, Lébény and Zsámbék.

#### 4. THE EMERGENCE OF THE TOWNS AND THE NOBILITY (1241-1308)

After the Mongol invasion it was imperative for Béla IV to reconsider the question of defence. In most of Europe the feudal landlords usually contributed armoured knights for this purpose. In Hungary, however, Béla's attempts to reclaim alienated castle lands had greatly hampered a move in this direction. Béla IV was, therefore, obliged to give the Hungarian feudal lords a free hand on their estates. In the course of reconstruction after the Mongol invasion, he granted estates to his barons with the stipulation that they erect fortresses and garrison them. The old county castles had been earthen structures, fortified by a stockade; stone castles had been the exception apart from the royal residences such as Esztergom and Székesfehérvár, which escaped capture by the Mongol invaders. Béla IV launched a campaign to build new stone castles—the Red Tower of Sárospatak and Salomon's Tower at Visegrád are well-known remains from this period. These castles consisted of a single keep of several storeys. The feudal barons, following the royal example, erected similar castles throughout the country during the following decades. These strongholds are examples of growing baronial power on one hand, and, on the other, of the substantial strengthening of the country's defences.

The final dissolution of the old order based on the county castles and royal estates was brought about not only by the emergence of a landed oligarchy, but also by the development of the middle layers of feudal society: the burghers of the towns and the smaller landowners (the so-called 'nobility').

##### The Growth of Towns

The earliest traces of urban life go back to the end of the twelfth century, when trade and agriculture began to separate and commodity production for the market began. The legal separation of the burghers from the peasantry also began through the granting of charters to

towns freeing them from feudal obligations and specifying their privileges. The earliest of these charters was obtained by the citizens of Székesfehérvár in the middle of the twelfth century, and granted them the freedom to elect justices, market rights and immunity from customs duties.

The rights given to towns in Hungary were derived from those given to groups of foreign settlers, known as *hospites*. The latter had obtained the privileges of choosing their own justices, living according to their own customs, and paying taxes in money based on their holdings of land instead of a poll-tax in kind.

From the thirteenth century onwards, not only foreign settlers were called *hospites*, but the term was applied also to those serfs who had either escaped from their landlords or left them legally, and had become established settlers elsewhere, obtaining the privileges of the *hospites*.

Most of these had been peasants, with a fair number of craftsmen among them. It was in their settlements beside royal castles and the bishops' residences that viticulture was first developed. The foreign trading settlements were also engaged in handicrafts. The Hungarians serving in the households of royal castles and episcopal estates carried on similar activities. Economic conditions were thus ripe for their assimilation with the foreign settlers when the social and political conditions were ready for such a development. This happened during the reorganization of the county castles.

Béla IV planned to transform the county castles into up-to-date fortresses by offering refuge to the unprotected inhabitants of the neighbouring settlements in exchange for their help in the defence and upkeep of the fortifications. Béla himself ceded his former seat, Esztergom, to the archbishopric, selecting Buda as the royal residence. The reconstruction of the city was also due to his efforts: after the Mongol invasion, he settled the surviving inhabitants of the destroyed settlements of Pest and Buda, along with a number of new settlers, on the Castle Hill, where new city walls were built and a new royal palace erected. The new settlement was given the name of Buda, while the reorganized old one was henceforth called Ó-Buda, i.e. Old Buda. With the reconstructed and newly populated Pest, the three settlements form the nucleus of present-day Budapest. Béla IV endeavoured to move other trading settlements into the reorganized county castles—e.g. Esztergom, Székesfehérvár, Pozsony, Sopron, Győr and Kolozsvár. Their populations were thus united into one community, comprising both the foreign settlers and the original castle-dwellers (*cives*), who were given the benefit of the formers' privileges. The twofold social

origin of the Hungarian town is clearly seen by the term *cives et hospites* in contemporary documents. Aside from the towns which developed from castles, other new towns grew up throughout the thirteenth century from German settlements, e.g. Nagyszehen, Brassó, Beszterce in Transylvania and Kassa, Lőcse, Késmárk and Bártfa in the north.

The Hungarian town, like its Western European counterpart, owed its freedom directly to the ruler. It was liberated from the jurisdiction of the county and its inhabitants could dispose freely of their possessions. They no longer paid taxes on their individual holdings of land, but each town paid a lump sum to the king with each hurgher contributing his share. Within the confines of the town all hurghers were equal and had full rights, subject only to the jurisdiction of the town council (in matters of town property even the Church and feudal lords were subject to the town council). The town's dignitaries assumed the hereditary title of count (*comes*), and were the local landlords, merchants and mine owners. They governed a population of peasants, who cultivated the land attached to the town and worked in their spare time in handicrafts or in the mines.

The development of towns in Hungary was only partly the result of local conditions: European economic development contributed to it in equal measure. In the thirteenth century Western Europe began its economic expansion towards the east. In the north, the Hanse towns and the Teutonic Knights penetrated into the Baltic; in the south Venice and Genoa expanded their trade into the eastern Mediterranean lands and the coastal regions of the Black Sea. Somewhat later in the same century the territory in between began to participate to a greater extent in European trade. The reasons for this expansion of trade can be explained by Western Europe's need for precious metals, and the yearning of Eastern Europe's ruling classes for the luxuries of life. In the second half of the thirteenth century mining for precious ores started on a large scale in the Czech, Polish and Hungarian mountains, followed by copper production in Hungary and lead mining in Poland. This contributed to an increase in trade with other countries, including trade in agricultural products as well. Prague, Breslau, Cracow, Lemberg, Buda and other commercial centres on Hungary's northern border were engaged in exchanging by harder mining and agricultural products and commodities, mainly for textiles from Western countries. In mining, Western capital, to a large extent German, shared with the Hungarian ruling classes in exploiting the country's mineral resources. German capital helped mining towns in Eastern Europe obtain charters from their rulers for the exploitation of

silver and copper. In the second half of the thirteenth century Selmehánya, Besztercehánya, Gölnichánya and Rozsnyóhánya were granted charters. Part of the ore and smelted metal obtained went as revenue into the royal treasuries, and part was used to close the gap between the value of commodities coming from the West and the limited amount of agricultural products available in exchange. Side by side with mining for copper and precious metals, a superior method of producing iron was introduced by the citizens of the new towns, who, by the end of the thirteenth century, were exceeding the output of the king's servants with their backward methods. In the second half of the fourteenth century Hungarian iron became a well-known export commodity, especially in northern countries.

### County Administration and Autonomy of the Nobility

Royal castles were rapidly turning into towns, and their inhabitants into free citizens; on the other hand, the problem of the great number of castle retainers (*jobbágy*) and royal knights (*servientes*) living in scattered villages remained unsolved. These small feudal landlords had exercised their rights in the area around the castles and on the royal estates. But the great feudal landlords, who had obtained these lands as royal grants, had no respect for the rights of their inferiors in rank. The small landlords had to join forces to defend their independence. The institution of the county justice, a remnant of the castle system, seemed to them inadequate. They tried to win local autonomy by electing from their ranks their own judges who, jointly with the *ispán*, should have jurisdiction over the whole county, including the feudal estate population. But the first step was to establish that the small landlords had equal rights with the great feudal landlords.

After the Mongol invasion, Béla IV, in order to exercise control over the feudal oligarchy, encouraged these activities. On the one hand, he confirmed the rights of the smaller landlords by recognizing their 'nobility'; on the other, he accepted the new county organization by issuing a decree in 1267, ordering that two or three 'noblemen' of each county attend the Szécsfehérvár assizes which were about to develop into a national assembly or diet. By that time the great feudal landlords had come to be called 'barons', whereas the title 'nobleman' was applied to former royal soldiers who had become small and middle landlords.

By the end of the thirteenth century the new county organization was legally recognized. It was headed by a baron, appointed by the



king as *ispán*, and under him judges and jurymen chosen from the nobility. In this way the small landlords could in the majority of cases keep their land free, and participate in the political and judicial rights of the feudal ruling class, but they could not keep themselves free from the influence of the growing power of the feudal oligarchy. Not wanting to suffer from their whims, and eager to obtain more land, the nobility offered their services to the barons as *familiares*, i.e. vassals, serving as administrative officers on the baronial estates or as retainers in the baronial armies. No wonder that in the course of time, county autonomy became a mere illusion, or else the tool of the feudal oligarchy.

### Feudal Oligarchy versus Royal Power

Besides supporting the citizens of the towns and the autonomy of the counties, Béla IV tried to secure the help of the Cumans in order to check the expansion of baronial power. The Cumans were called back from the Balkans, given land in the region between the Danube and the Tisza, and, in order to cement their ties to the king, the crown prince, Stephen, married the daughter of their chieftain. The king also tried to obtain the assistance of the friars. From the early thirteenth century onwards, the Dominicans and Franciscans had been extremely popular in Hungary because of their eloquent preaching. The rulers of Hungary used them for converting the heretical Bogomils and the pagan Cumans, and Béla IV tried to counterbalance the higher clergy with them.

Baronial ambitions could, for the moment, be satisfied abroad. Béla IV intervened in the dynastic struggles following the extinction of the Austrian Babenberg family. According to an agreement made with Ottokar II, King of Bohemia, Béla obtained Styria, to be governed as a duchy by Prince Stephen. Styrian lords, however, dissatisfied with Hungarian rule, expelled the Hungarians at the end of 1259, offering the duchy to Ottokar, who, after the victory of Marchfeld in 1260, took possession of the territory together with the rest of the Babenberg heritage.

For two decades at least, the forces of feudal anarchy had been tied down in rebuilding the country, sharing in the spoils of the royal estates and fighting abroad. Yet anarchy was ready to break out as soon as the feud of Béla IV and his son, Stephen, 'the younger king', provided the opportunity. The ruling class broke into two factions, and in the course of the struggle it soon became evident that the real

masters of the country were the barons with their huge estates, and the power given them by their control of the county administration. The Pope offered to arbitrate between the two sides, hoping thereby to obtain the suzerainty so far repeatedly denied to him. Béla refused once again and in his last letters to the Pope he declared that he never had and did not expect to have help from the Holy See.

At the time of his death in 1270, papal intervention reached its highest point; while formerly pretending to support royal power, the Pope now openly joined the forces of feudal anarchy.

During the brief reign of Stephen V (1270–1272), the baronial factions no longer endeavoured to hide behind dynastic struggles. Some of the barons managed to detach parts of the country, placing them under foreign rulers, in order to secure their support against the king. After the death of Béla IV, the *bán*, Henrik Kőszegi, offered his castles to Ottokar II, King of Bohemia. In the war which followed, the Bohemian army was defeated in a battle fought beside the Rába river.

Ottokar II made his peace with Stephen, forgetting about Henrik Kőszegi, who was obliged to ask his king's pardon. He was unrepentant, however, and with the help of the queen's favourite, the *bán* Joachim, carried off the young crown prince, Ladislav, in order to blackmail the king. While pursuing the traitor, Stephen V died suddenly, and power passed into the hands of the queen, Joachim and Henrik Kőszegi. The Csák family organized a faction for their overthrow. In 1274, they succeeded in carrying away the young king and attacking their rivals. Henrik Kőszegi died on the battlefield and the *bán* Joachim followed him in 1277. The sons of Henrik Kőszegi continued the fight, and following their father's example, asked the help of Ottokar II. This action encouraged the Csák faction to support Rudolf of Habsburg in his fight against Ottokar for the possession of the Austrian provinces. Hungarian support secured Rudolf's victory in the battle on the Marchfeld (1278) which also paved the way for the establishment of the future Habsburg dynasty.

When Ladislav IV (1272–1290), surnamed 'the Cuman', reached his adolescence, he tried to throw off the protection of the barons and establish his power with the support of the Cumans, from whom his mother descended.

The nomadic Cumans were a considerable military force. They still lived in a tribal society and observed pagan ritual, while each free member of the community performed military service. The Hungarian feudal lords tried to subject them and therefore the Cumans allied with the king against them. The feudal lords then suspended their factional struggles and joined forces against the king and the Cumans.

Their leader was Lodomer, the energetic and erudite Archbishop of Esztergom, who, considering the king's alliance with the pagan Cumans a threat to the Church, appealed for papal intervention. With the help of the papal legate, the barons and high churchmen forced the king to agree to a law introducing Christianity among the Cumans and terminating their nomadic customs.

The king, however, was not willing to enforce the law extorted from him, and was excommunicated by the papal legate. Ladislav, in reply, delivered the legate into the hands of the Cumans, and went to live among them. He renounced his wife and married according to pagan ritual a Cuman woman called Edua. He was captured by the barons, who forced him to join in their warfare against the Cumans. In 1280, in the battle of Hódtó, the Cumans were defeated, but Ladislav's determination remained unbroken. In 1285, he called in the Mongols, who, joined by the Cumans, devastated the country. Only a small number of Hungarian lords remained loyal to the king, who surrounded himself with Cumans, Mongols and Moslems. After sending his wife into a nunnery, he made Edua his lawful queen. Lodomer announced a crusade against him, but before this took place, Ladislav was murdered by Cuman assassins hired by the barons to rid them of the young king, who fought for his power to the last.

### The Feudal Anarchy

The grandson of Andrew II who was at that time in Venice was chosen by the barons to succeed the childless Ladislav IV. Andrew III (1290–1301) was just as helpless against the flourishing feudal anarchy as his predecessor had been. The country was divided into regions independent of the king, each in the hands of a baronial faction. Under their auspices neither royal nor church property was spared; they confiscated estates, and put their relatives and supporters into vacated church offices. The Church protested, seeking protection from the king, but owing to the lack of papal support Andrew was unable to intervene. At the death of Ladislav IV, the Holy See had declared Hungary a papal fief, and had granted it to the young Neapolitan Prince Charles, a member of the House of Anjou, who was related to the Hungarian royal family. Charles soon found supporters among the Hungarian barons.

Internal strife and threats from without forced Andrew III to rely upon the county administration and the diet, which had a considerable majority of rank and file nobility. The assembly of 1298 excluded the

barons. Power was taken away from the *ispán*, appointed from the ranks of the barons, and county administration was entrusted to the justices, representing the nobility.

This early attempt at a monarchy controlled by a diet failed, but showed that the nobility was in the ascendant. Their political consciousness was expressed by Ladislav IV's chaplain, Simon Kézai, who confirmed that the community of the nobility was the real representative of the country, both by Roman law and scholastic teaching. With this view in mind, he wrote a history of the Hungarian conquest, adding to it the history of the Huns, as the ancestors of the Hungarians. It was not the saintly King Stephen who was put before his king as a paragon, but the pagan Attila, known as 'the scourge of God', a defiant gesture referring to Ladislav's attitude to the Church. Kézai openly declared himself a partisan of the nobility, and approved of the king's alliance with them against the barons. The alliance, however, was still too feeble to contain the forces of feudal anarchy, which reached its climax in the contests after the death of Andrew III, the last Hungarian king of the line of Árpád.

A baronial party declared the Bohemian Prince Wenceslas, Ottokar II's grandchild, a descendant of the Árpáds on the female line, king of Hungary; but he, not being able to consolidate his power, resigned and handed over the crown to his relative, Otto, prince of Bavaria. Otto was captured by the voivode of Transylvania, deprived of the crown and forced to depart in shame. Rumours spread that kingless Hungary would be divided between the duke of Austria and the king of Bohemia.

Among the claimants to the throne, Charles of Anjou seemed the most powerful. He secured for himself the support of the Hungarian high clergy, due mainly to papal protection and a substantial loan from Italian bankers. Because of the devastation caused by the baronial struggle, the country was on the brink of disaster, and the clergy, afraid to lose their possessions, were ready to support a potential protector with foreign support.

In 1308, the Pope sent Cardinal Gentile to Hungary and his surviving correspondence gives an idea of the prevailing state of corruption. In Transylvania, the all-powerful voivode tried to force the clergy to make his son a bishop. The bishopric of Pécs was occupied by the *bán*, Henrik Kőszegi, lord of Transdanubia; the consecrated bishop was set aside, and the clergy, after announcing Henrik Kőszegi's excommunication, were expelled. The title of 'palatine' was wrongly used by three barons. The southern provinces were held by Slavonic barons, each assuming the title of *bán*. The latter were supporters of

Charles of Anjou, wanting him more as a party leader than a ruler. These barons assumed the offices of *ispáns*—they lived in princely style, coining their own money, ravaging and pillaging the countryside and forming alliance with foreign powers. The papal legate succeeded, after prolonged negotiations, in obtaining formal recognition of Charles I (1308–1342) by the barons. Seeing, however, that papal authority was no longer sufficient to stem the anarchy, the legate withdrew in 1311, after first excommunicating the most formidable of the barons, Máté Csák. In reply, the latter declared himself an independent ruler and waged war for the possessions of the Archbishop of Esztergom. As a result Charles was forced to withdraw into the southern parts of the country.

### The Transformation of the Hungarian Peasantry

Feudal anarchy accelerated the gradual amalgamation of the serf and free elements of the peasantry. Growing productivity in agriculture and the ensuing development of barter trade swept away the last impediments. In the course of time, landlords came to see clearly that the lands cultivated by serfs yielded much less than those of the free peasants or *hospites* cultivating their communal possessions. The constant complaints of the population of the former castle lands and royal estates because of heavy taxes made the whole peasantry into a revolutionary force. In the second half of the thirteenth century there were continuous revolts, dues left undelivered, and mass escapes, growing into large-scale movements from one lord's land to another.

The landlords who first profited from these movements were those who needed new hands for their newly granted lands. The loss in population owing to the Mongol invasion had made labour increasingly scarce. Thus it was not difficult for the escaped peasant to find better labour conditions with a new landlord. It would have been in the interests of the ruling class as a whole to stop this trend, which reduced the level of exploitation of the peasant, but they failed to halt the movement because the new barons in need of labour were ready to grant protection to the escapees. Naturally, it was first of all the serfs who tried to improve their lot, and were ready to leave at once if not granted the same privileges as enjoyed by the free peasants. As a matter of course, landlords proved willing to reduce labour services and dues in kind and institute a hereditary system of land leasing. In many cases this was equivalent to freedom of socage and of movement. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, slaves employed as domestic

servants were the last to be freed. The former slave settlements became villages based on communal cultivation, but if the landlord proved too severe, no one would work on his demesne. By the first half of the fourteenth century, the former demesnes were mostly deserted and the term *praedium* came to denote an uninhabited place.

At the end of the thirteenth century the ruling class was obliged to recognize the peasant's freedom to move, as well as his hereditary lease and communal use of his land. His obligations, like those of the foreign settlers, were no longer determined according to his personal status, but according to the amount of land leased from the landlord; one part of the dues owed could be paid in money, the rest in a defined quantity of goods. Some labour services remained as a legacy of serfdom, but owing to the decay of the demesne they were negligible compared with payments in money and kind. The position of the peasantry changed considerably. They were more and more generally called *jobbágy*. This actually meant the application to the formerly unfree peasantry of the name which in early feudalism designated freemen acting as officials in royal castles, who in the meantime had merged partly into the nobility and partly into the urban burgher population. This by itself shows that the distinction between bondsmen and freemen existing before feudalism ultimately disappeared, and a uniform class of tenants emerged.



## 5. ATTEMPT AT ADRIATIC HEGEMONY (1308-1437)

### The Development of a New Aristocracy

The outcome of the peasants' migration and the development of the towns was to concentrate the smaller landlords and some of the greater feudal lords around the central power in order to defend their common interests. The advantages of allying with the king were first recognized by that section of the ruling class which was unable to hold its own against the most powerful barons. The most fervent supporters of Charles of Anjou belonged to the poorer branches of the baronial families who had been pushed into the background, robbed and expelled from their family properties by the richer members. In his first years King Charles was supported by members of these families, such as the Szécsényi, Szécsi, Bebek, Nekcsei, Garai, Lackfi and others. They and their retainers, together with other victims of the feudal oligarchy, made up the king's armed forces. With this army Charles was able to fight against the overlords of the provinces. By 1321, with the death of Máté Csák, the feudal anarchy came to an end after ten years of fighting. Charles's power was at last established, and he could move his seat from Temesvár to Visegrád.

After the fall of the great feudal barons, Charles regained the illegally alienated castle lands and royal estates, but still held only a small portion of what had been indiscriminately given away by his predecessors. The old castle system had been decaying, and Charles had no intention of restoring an antiquated institution. He organized the remaining royal estates around castles, and made them independent of the county administration. They were governed by castellans, whose duties were more economic than military, as the latter had become more and more the right and obligation of the feudal ruling class and, to some extent, of the bourgeoisie. The royal castle was garrisoned by a small number of armed guards; the country's standing army consisted of a few thousand soldiers paid by the king, together with the companies of the county militia, and secular and ecclesiastical private armies. The county and baronial armies fighting under their own banners were called *banderia*.

The new type of army was the logical outcome of the strengthening of the feudal system. Several hundred castles and several thousand villages were owned by a few aristocratic families who also became the temporal and ecclesiastical dignitaries of the country. A great part of the small and middle nobility who owed them fealty as *familiares* (vassals) served in their armies and managed their estates.

The crushing of the great barons prevented the creation of new feudal provinces, but could not prevent the feudal disintegration into large estates. The feudal lord enjoyed not merely the dues and services of the peasantry of his estate, but also held jurisdiction over them. He collected royal taxes on his own estate and his soldiers fought under his leadership in the royal army. As voivodes, *báns* and *ispáns* the barons and their officials administered the affairs of large areas not immediately under their feudal jurisdiction. In these circumstances no direct political role was left open for the nobility with small and middle-sized estates. In the fourteenth century the king held diets only on rare occasions.

### The Economic Policy of Charles I

Charles I tried to base his power on direct and indirect royal revenue called *regaliu* (i.e. on taxes, customs, mine and coinage monopolies) and not on his holdings of land. His chief adviser, his childhood friend from Naples, Palatine Fülöp Druget and the second man on whom he relied, Dömötör Nekcsei, Lord Chief Treasurer, were inspired by foreign example, especially by that of the more advanced Bohemia. They tried to take advantage of the demand in Western Europe for precious metal. In the second half of the thirteenth century, Hungarian silver production had increased rapidly, and in the early fourteenth century, a more important event, the discovery of gold, had led to the founding of mining towns. Free trade in these metals lured a great number of merchants to Hungary, especially from Italy and Germany. In exchange for gold and silver, the Hungarian market was inundated by foreign luxury articles. In 1325, a monopoly was introduced as in Bohemia which made it compulsory to exchange silver and gold ore at the royal mint. In spite of the low rate of exchange it brought a good income to the mine-owners, at the same time supplying the mint with sufficient metal for coining money at yearly intervals. Foreign merchants were compelled to accept gold florins and silver denarii, instead of unminted metal, however, it was good business, because the Hungarian florin was one of Europe's best currencies.

In order to increase his income from his metal monopoly and monetary reforms, King Charles changed the mining law passed by Béla IV. The law had provided free mining even for foreign miners in exchange for a certain portion to be delivered to the royal treasury. The owner of the ground, should it not be the king, received nothing, but was even obliged to offer the land to the monarch. No wonder that the landlords were not eager to report finding metal ores, and prevented any attempt at mining. King Charles reversed this situation and by allowing the owner of the ground to take a share of the profit, he encouraged landowners to promote mining. The so-called 'chambers', offices founded during the Árpád dynasty for the administration of precious metal mining, the coining of money, the salt mines and the collection of customs revenue (the so-called thirtieth) were farmed out to foreign and Hungarian merchants.

The feudal ruling class, because of their military service, were excused from payment of taxes. The king, therefore, could obtain revenue only from the peasantry and bourgeoisie, and, occasionally, from the clergy. As money was no longer reminted yearly, the extra renewal tax was not available. To recompense himself, the king levied a new tax, called 'chamber profit' (*lucrum camerae*), and, in spite of frequent protests from the landlords, extra taxes were levied on the peasantry. The towns were also frequently overburdened by extra taxation, but they enjoyed the privilege of paying lump sums at long intervals. The towns had chiefly a financial interest for the king, and legally they were controlled by the treasurer responsible for royal revenues. Charles was also more daring than his predecessors in taxing the Church. The higher clergy were expected to pay consecration charges, give New Year presents and send soldiers into the royal army. After the death of an ecclesiastical dignitary, his estate remained tied to the crown until a new appointment was made. The king also claimed one-third of papal tithes collected for the crusades. During the Avignon period, the popes were too weak to defend the rights of the clergy and compromised on this point.

### Foreign Affairs

The foreign policy of Charles was closely connected with his plans for the economic reconstruction of the country. He did not wage war for conquest. His attempt to bring the former Cumania, in the Wallachian plain, formerly part of Hungary, under his control failed owing to the resistance of Bazarab, the Rumanian voivode, who during

the days of feudal anarchy had made it into an independent province. Charles acquiesced, and recognized the Rumanian state. He then concentrated his attention on events of decisive importance to the future of Hungary beyond the western and northern borders.

From the second half of the thirteenth century onwards there were dynastic contests between the Austrian dukes and the Hungarian and Bohemian kings in order to unite East-Central Europe under their hegemony. Béla IV as well as Ottokar II and his successors had vainly attempted conquests. The Habsburgs who had secured the Austrian provinces and the Luxemburgs who, following the extinction of the Přemysl family, had ascended the Bohemian throne, tried to extend their powers over the German Empire by the renewal of their expansive designs against Hungary and Poland.

Charles wisely saw that it was to his interest to hinder the expansion of both German dynasties. Wladislaw Lokietek, King of Poland, was in agreement with him as he was threatened by an attack from John of Luxemburg who already held Silesia in subjection and aspired to the Polish throne. The friendly relations between Hungary and Poland were sealed by the marriage of Charles with Wladislaw's daughter, Elizabeth. This was followed by a settlement of the Polish-Bohemian conflict at the meeting of the kings at Visegrád in 1335, which was brought about through the mediation of the king of Hungary. John of Luxemburg was to resign his claim to the throne of Poland, and Casimir, Wladislaw Lokietek's successor, surrendered Silesia to the king of Bohemia. Simultaneously, a treaty was signed between Casimir and the Teutonic Knights. The main advantage for Charles was the Hungarian-Bohemian-Polish-Bavarian alliance against the Habsburgs, which enabled him to regain from them the Hungarian border territories lost during the period of anarchy. The alliance also had economic aims: Hungarian, Bohemian and Polish trade with Germany and Italy had suffered greatly from the staple right of Vienna. To circumvent this impediment, new trade routes were devised through Moravia to Buda, and to Cracow. Thereby a new road to Eastern and Central Europe was opened to South German merchants, principally from Nuremberg, who succeeded in gaining control of the precious metal trade through a series of privileges granted them in the following decades. Partly by squeezing out the Italians, and partly by compelling the Viennese traders to act as their agents, the South German merchants paved the way for their economic hegemony over East-Central Europe, which to a large degree contributed to the weakening of Hungary's orientation towards the Adriatic and its gradual incorporation into the Central European system of states.

Charles had succeeded in obtaining peace and normal relations on the western and northern borders. However, he did not manage to secure the southern provinces which had been in the possession of the Árpád kings. The Croatian, Slavonian and Dalmatian areas remained in the hands of the local baronial leaders, who offered the Dalmatian towns to Venice in return for support against the king of Hungary. In order to hold Venice and its ally, Stephan Dushan, King of Serbia, in check, Charles tried to form closer ties with his Neapolitan relatives. His younger son, Andrew, married Joanna, the granddaughter of King Robert, and successor to the throne of Naples. His elder son, Louis, inherited the crown of Hungary.

#### The Adventure in Naples and Expansion in the Balkans

Louis (1342–1382) was not hampered by unfavourable conditions in his efforts to build up the edifice begun by his father. He inherited a full treasury and secure western and northern borders. He himself was filled with ambition for conquest—his heroes were Alexander the Great and St. Ladislas of Hungary, who had launched the first expansion towards the South.

With the death of King Robert in 1343, the question of the succession to the throne of Naples became acute. According to the contract made with Charles, Prince Andrew with his wife were jointly to hold the throne; but Joanna, greedy for power and detesting her husband, did not want to accept this situation. The Pope, the liege-lord of Naples, was not pleased with the idea that the Hungarian Anjous, with their claim to the Dalmatian coast, should get a foothold in Naples.

Prince Andrew was murdered with the complicity of his wife in 1345. As Joanna had been involved in her husband's murder, Louis demanded from the Pope that she should be deprived of the throne, and Naples he ceded to him according to the family law of the Anjous. With his army reinforced by Italian and German mercenaries he invaded Italy in 1347. He occupied Naples, but the Pope, reluctant to grant it to him as his fief, turned the king of France and Charles IV, Emperor of Germany, against him. The diplomatic discussions took years, and Louis's army in Naples crumbled in the meantime. His second personal appearance on the scene in 1350 did little to help matters. Seeing that his plans for an Adriatic empire were unrealistic, Louis resigned his claim to Naples in 1352, but never recognized the legality of Joanna's rule.

Despite his failure in Naples, Louis did not give up his attempts to secure supremacy in the Balkans and the Adriatic. The only positive feature of his policy was its connection with the Dalmatian towns' struggles for independence. In the course of the wars with Venice which began in 1356, he not only liberated those Dalmatian towns which had once belonged to Hungary, but also extended his supremacy to the hitherto independent Ragusa. In the treaty of Zara, signed in 1353, Venice resigned its rights over the Dalmatian towns.

This was the last phase in the completion of his father's policy. In the course of centuries, the Hungarian-Croatian-Dalmatian union had grown into a political reality, its existence and security being equally desirable to the Hungarian and Dalmatian ruling class. The situation was not the same beyond the Save and in the provinces along the Lower Danube, where the interests of the Hungarian rulers clashed with those of the Serbian, Bulgarian and Rumanian ruling class, who desired political independence. After ten years of useless warfare, Louis had to accept merely formal vows of allegiance from the Serbian, Bulgarian and Rumanian rulers. Hungary's Balkan expansion would have been justified if Louis had accepted leadership against the Turkish menace. He failed to do so and, in the seventies, the Turks subjected his Balkan vassals one by one.

In addition to the marriage settlement of Naples, Charles left his son a claim to the throne of Poland, which cost Louis substantial sacrifices. More than once, he had to render military assistance to his uncle, Casimir the Great, in his wars against the Lithuanians. At the death of Casimir in 1370, Louis inherited the throne, adding greatly to his worries. He was unable to stem the feudal anarchy and so the Polish barons succeeded in extorting from him the first substantial concessions limiting royal powers.

The aging king again turned his attention towards the dream of his early days, Naples. He had willingly resigned the throne of his ancestors, but he could not forget the wickedness of Joanna. He adopted his cousin, Charles, Prince of Durazzo, to serve as an instrument of his revenge, and sent him with a Hungarian army to Italy to win Naples from Joanna. This was in 1378, when Louis's diplomacy managed to bring about a coalition of Genoa, Padua, Verona and the Austrian dukes against Joanna and Venice. His fleet joined that of Genoa to besiege Venice, but they proved powerless against the determined defence of the Venetians. In 1381, the treaty of Turin reiterated that Dalmatia was a Hungarian possession. By then Charles of Durazzo was master of Naples, and Louis, shortly before his death, had his revenge, as Joanna was strangled by Hungarian mercenaries.

Seeming victories had gained for Louis the surname 'Great'; but he had to pay dearly for it. Wars had increased feudal disintegration, and baronial power had been strengthened by the spoils of war and new royal grants. New alliances were made and new baronial families became dominant. Three factions under the Lackfi, Garai and Horváti families struggled for power at the end of the reign of Louis.

### The Loss of the Hungarian Possessions in the Adriatic

Louis I died without male issue and he desired his daughter Mary to inherit both the Hungarian and Polish crowns. She was to marry Sigismund of Luxemburg, the younger son of Charles IV, King of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperor. The planned marriage was the symbol of long-standing political aspirations in Central Europe: the union of Hungary, Poland and Bohemia. For the Polish ruling class, however, the connection with Hungary and Bohemia was not desirable, as the Luxemburg dynasty did not conceal its sympathies with the Teutonic Knights. Mary's succession to the Polish throne had to be abandoned, and her sister Hedwig (Jadwiga) inherited the crown.

The Hungarian ruling class was no less antagonistic with regard to the new foreign policy. From among the baronial factions only that led by the Lackfis approved of the marriage of Mary and Sigismund. The Garais and Horvátis, resident in the southern parts, regarded the scrapping of the Adriatic policy as disastrous. Profiting from the baronial factional struggles, Charles of Durazzo, now King of Naples, at the invitation of the Horvátis returned to Hungary with Italian mercenaries in 1385, and was crowned king. A few weeks later, however, he was murdered by the Palatine, Miklós Garai, who was jealous of his power. Ladislas, the young son of Charles, was declared king by the Horvátis. In order to seek peace talks, Queen Mary, her mother Queen Elizabeth, and the Palatine Garai took themselves to the south, but they were attacked, the Palatine and his retainers slaughtered, the queens captured, and Elizabeth smothered in prison. After these events the Lackfis and the younger Miklós Garai, seeking to forget past enmities, gathered around Sigismund, offering him a hard bargain. He was to make a bond with the barons: they were ready to recognize him as joint ruler with Mary, provided he promised to rule in conjunction with them, a promise which could be enforced by arms. This was the price he had to pay for the release of his wife, and subsequently he was crowned king in 1387.

The Turks were advancing on Hungary and a few raiders had already crossed the frontiers by that time. King Sigismund was fully conscious that his forces were inadequate, and called for international support to help defend Hungary against the Turks. Crusades were a thing of the past, and the appeal of 1396 could only mobilize a couple of thousand adventurous Western European knights, who joined the Hungarian forces and penetrated into parts of the Balkans already under Turkish rule. The battle of Nicopolis, a resounding victory for the Turks, helped to renew old differences. István Lackfi and his relatives considered the time ripe for seizing power, and organized support for Ladislas of Naples, but fell victim to the snares set by Garai and his Styrian friend, Hermann Cilli, in 1397. Another baronial faction declared Ladislas of Naples king in 1403, and he was recognized by the Pope. This faction was soon crushed by Sigismund, and though he granted a universal pardon, subsequently his officials were all chosen from the Garai faction. Revenge for the papal intervention was exacted by the statute of 1404, according to which no papal edicts could be made public without royal consent (*placetum regium*); in practice this meant that the Pope was deprived of his right to appoint the higher clergy in Hungary. In 1417, the Pope formally recognized the Hungarian sovereign's right to designate archbishops and bishops.

Sigismund's rule was no longer threatened by dissenting factions and pretenders, but he greatly depended on the Garai faction's support. The Order of the Dragon, founded in 1408 under the auspices of the king, comprised the members of the Garai faction and other barons who joined them. According to its rules, the king was merely the first among the knights, *primus inter pares*. During the thirty-odd years of Garai's uninterrupted palatineship, the 24 barons who were members of the Dragon Order, shared the high political and military offices with the highest going to the Garai-Cilli families. A new aristocracy was recruited from the rising nobility and care was taken to see they fitted closely into the existing political structure.

The strengthening of the baronial administration was not unwelcome to Sigismund, as it gave him a free hand for the realization of his dreams in foreign affairs. Turkish expansion had been stopped for well over a decade by Tamerlane's victory at Ankara and internal troubles within the Turkish Empire. The Hungarian ruling class enjoyed apparent security, and Sigismund turned all his energies to trying to solve the problems of the Holy Roman Empire and the schism in the Church. In 1410, he was elected emperor, and he did his best to rid himself of Hungarian affairs. The first result was the loss of

Dalmatia. Venice bought Dalmatia from Ladislas of Naples and waged war in its cause in 1411. Sigismund pledged 13 towns in the district of Szepes to the king of Poland to pay for their defence, but he cared more about being crowned emperor, so he made terms for an armistice and ceded to Venice what had been conquered. For six years he was away from Hungary, but after he had achieved the great aim of his life, mending the schism in the Church, he found himself confronted with the Hussite uprising of 1419. He thought his Bohemian throne more important than Dalmatia, and in 1420 Dalmatia was formally ceded to Venice.

More than three hundred years of involvement in Adriatic affairs had ended for Hungary. Both political and economic affairs had tended to make Hungary give up its relatively independent position between the Adriatic and Central Europe and become instead a partner in the Central European political system which was developing.

## 6. MATURE FEUDAL SOCIETY (14th Century)

The serf and the free peasant of early feudalism developed into the unified class of tenants and the town bourgeoisie in the fourteenth century. These social developments were accompanied by the swift growth of the forces of production and a considerable rise in the economic and cultural level.

### Beginnings of Agricultural Commodity Production

The loosening of peasant obligations in the early fourteenth century led to a considerable agricultural development. It was about this time that the three-field system of cultivation began to spread. Each of the tenants was allotted a plot of land in the open fields and could keep his animals on the common pasture. His house with garden, farmyard and plots were together called a 'tenure' (*sessio*). The peasant had a hereditary right to his tenure provided he fulfilled his obligations. If he moved on, or if he died without an heir, the tenure returned to the landlord. The tenure was the basis of the peasant's obligations to his landlord; he usually paid dues in money (*census*) and in kind (corn or wine), sent enforced gifts on holidays (*munera*) and offered labour services (at that time mostly one day a week.)

This method of cultivation aimed at self-sufficiency, but with commodity production becoming more widespread, freer methods were introduced. Viticulture, which needs a lot of labour, was the first to emerge from the tenure system; once his dues in wine had been delivered to the landlord, the peasant was able to dispose freely of his vineyard by selling it or pawning it. He could also obtain extra plots for cultivation, in addition to his hereditary holding. With serfs escaping, and obtaining their freedom in ever greater numbers, the landlords were left with many untenanted holdings. These could be easily acquired by peasants with draught animals, some of whom even used hired labour. In return for extra holdings of land or vine-

yards, the landlords demanded the second tithe, the first being due to the Church. The second tithe was called the 'ninth' (*none*).

The greater productivity of peasant labour made the landlords yearn to exploit the peasants more fully by obliging them to pay the ninth on their hereditary tenures as well. This would have deprived the peasant of the greatest achievement in his struggles: payment of fixed rents and dues independent of the volume of production. The payment of the ninth could only be enforced if the peasantry was deprived of its right to move where better labour conditions prevailed. Such a law was attempted after the failure of the Naples campaign and the great plague of 1349 which followed.

#### Nobility versus Peasants

The higher clergy and the aristocracy increased their wealth and power as the primary beneficiaries of the Naples adventure. Their noble retainers also shared in the spoils, but the nobility at home was left to bear the brunt of the expensive warfare. King Louis had managed to spend his father's enormous wealth, and was obliged to have recourse to heavier taxation. The biggest burden was placed on the peasantry, but affected also the yield of the feudal landlords' estates because the overburdened tenants were unable to render adequate service. The barons were compensated by more and more grants of land, but the nobility of small and medium means could only try to manage by raising the level of peasant services, but this was rendered more or less impossible because of the free movement of the peasants. The ravages of the plague—although much less serious than in Western Europe—also caused great movement among the peasants towards landlords offering better conditions. This meant, in effect, that the barons were the only landlords who could offer the newcomers more advantageous conditions, as only they remained unaffected by temporary fluctuations in their incomes. Moreover, the barons were prepared shamelessly to abduct peasants by force from the unarmed nobility. The nobility protested *en masse* and demanded equal chances in the exploitation of the peasantry, eventually forcing the king to call the long-silent diet.

The dict of 1351 extorted a number of favourable concessions from the king. With reference to their ancient rights, codified in Andrew II's 'Golden Bull', the nobility demanded equal privileges (*una eademque libertas*) with the barons; first, that with the death of the male heir their estates should not become crown properties,

but pass to their next of kin by right of descent; and, secondly, that they should be authorized to sit in judgement over their tenants, in all except criminal cases and that, in criminal cases, the county court including their representatives should pass judgement. The nobility also tacitly included among their privileges the barons' right to be exempted from taxation. Thus, the rights of the nobility were codified, entitling them to become the future legislators of the country.

Yet the main difference between the baronage and the nobility had not been obliterated, because the barons were still able to offer more favourable terms to the peasantry. Forceful abduction was explicitly forbidden, but this did not prevent the peasant from moving himself to the landlord offering better conditions. At that time, free movement was not yet explicitly forbidden. The ruling class unanimously demanded that permission to move should be withheld if the peasant had not paid his dues. This was agreed and codified by King Charles. It was not in the interest of the barons to check completely the movement of the peasant. All the nobility could achieve was that the king and the barons were obliged to collect the ninth on their estates, too, so that no peasant could be won over to another lord by remitting this burden.

It was primarily the Sekels (*székely*) on the eastern border of Transylvania who succeeded in preventing the intrusion of feudal relations. The Sekels were a Hungarianized Bulgarian-Turkish tribe who had joined the Hungarians before the Conquest. Up to the end of the fifteenth century they kept up their military organization, granted to them at the time of Géza and Stephen I, as the duty of freemen. The Sekels remained free peasants cultivating communal lands in exchange for military service. Throughout the fourteenth century their leaders were regarded as equal in rank with the nobility, but they could not subject the rank and file Sekels, and so employed prisoners of war or hired labour on their lands, and could obtain new possessions only outside the area occupied by the Sekels. The old order began to be broken up only in the fifteenth century, when the poor Sekel, not capable of rendering military service, had to work for the rich. But the majority of the Sekels remained free peasants obliged to render military service.

A similar, but quicker development may be observed among the Cumans who settled in an area surrounded by feudal estates, and the Alans (Hungarian *jász*), a tribe of Caucasian origin, who had come with them. After their conversion to Christianity they gradually mingled with the Hungarians, becoming the tenants of either the king, their own chieftains, or Hungarian landlords.



The nomadic Rumanian and Ruthenian shepherds, who lived in the northern and eastern mountainous parts, had no strong organization like those of the Cuman and Alan tribes; thus their resistance to the internal and external forces of feudalism was weaker. The Rumanians had originally served as border guards and, in the thirteenth century, were organized into autonomous districts. At the head of their settlements stood the *kenéz*, and at the head of the districts stood the voivodes. The majority of the voivodes and the *kenéz* obtained noble status in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and subjected the free shepherds. The Rumanian districts were transformed into counties under the local nobility. The leaders of the Ruthenian shepherds themselves became tenants of Hungarian barons and no proper feudal ruling class could develop amongst them.

The German settlers in Transylvania and the Szepesség (Zips, at the foot of the Northern Carpathians), called Saxons, developed the highest forms of local autonomy. Many of their village settlements grew into towns during the thirteenth century. These German towns, with the surrounding German villages, did not form part of a county administration, but came directly under royal jurisdiction. Political leadership was in the hands of town patricians, who could levy taxes but could not turn the free German peasants into their tenants.

### The Growth of Boroughs

The statutes of 1351 exempted only fortified towns from the payment of the ninth. The provision seemed to be favourable to the towns but was actually weighted against them, because there were few towns fortified by walls, as most had not been rich enough to provide them.

Throughout the early fourteenth century, the king continued to issue charters to towns. The landlords, on the other hand, tried to counteract the flood of population moving into them by granting the same privileges to their own villages, provided they remained under their supremacy. More and more townships developed which were subject to landlords. Some reached a high standard of development (e.g. Debrecen in the fourteenth century, with its prosperous trade and commerce), but they were far behind the royal towns as far as legal and economic independence was concerned. Their own justices could not pass sentences except in minor cases; in criminal cases the landlord and his officials sat in judgement. These towns had no right of appeal to the king, the landlord being their highest

judge. In addition to the legal system, the citizens were at a disadvantage because they did not pay their taxes in one sum, but were liable for taxation individually to both landlord and state.

Limited though the autonomy of these towns was, it granted their inhabitants greater freedom than in the villages, where the peasants were constantly harassed by the officers of the landlord. In addition, the landlords also granted market rights to their towns, which always acted as an incentive to agricultural production and trade. These towns generally developed within the baronial estates, because only the barons were able to turn to their own advantage the movement of the population. They could also obtain trading privileges from the king, and extend their protection to subjects trading outside the boundaries of their estates. The landlords with small and medium estates wanted to prevent the king and great landlords from exempting their unfortified towns from the ninth tax, which would encourage even greater movement among the peasantry. The ninth tax became a stumbling block to town development, and created a distinction between two types of town in Hungary: one with full autonomy (royal town), the other subjected to a landlord. In the eyes of contemporaries, the town wall became the symbol of its status, which was reflected in the title given to the two types. The fortified town became known as a city (*civitas*), and the unfortified one was called a borough (*oppidum*).

The statutes of 1351 were a victory for the nobility, but in point of fact they still remained far behind the baronage. The nobleman could not oppose the baron, as he himself was usually the baron's vassal. The nobility did not succeed either in fully exploiting the peasantry. Constant improvements in the technique of agriculture and increases in output meant that despite the higher level of taxation, the well-to-do peasant was left with a considerable surplus to sell. Increased taxes forced even the poorest peasant to consume as little as possible and take his goods to market. The right of free movement, in spite of illegal attempts to break it, made it possible for him to move into the towns. Many availed themselves of this opportunity, thus leaving more and more uncultivated strips in the village fields. The nobility's antagonistic attitude towards the towns may have weakened, but could not prevent this development which, about the middle of the fourteenth century, intensified even in the more backward, cattle-raising Great Plain.

Boroughs developed in the Plain under specific circumstances. Archaeological research, examining old bones, discovered that the small cattle with fine bones and small horns indigenous to Central

Europe had been reared to be 15 per cent bigger by the middle of the fourteenth century; they became the ancestor of the large, beautiful animal with enormous horns, the pride of Hungarian agriculture, and the best export commodity alongside wine for centuries to come. Although written records speak of cattle export at the end of the eleventh century, its development was connected with the rise of the flourishing South German towns in the fourteenth century, which were ready to buy any number of cattle from Hungary. Owing to geographical factors, and the relative backwardness of agriculture in the Great Plain, the demand for cattle brought new economic opportunities which influenced the development of boroughs. During the fourteenth century the new boroughs in the Great Plain developed out of rich villages with enormous grazing lands (e.g. Debrecen, Kecske-mét, Cegléd, Nagykőrös, Hódmezővásárhely, etc.). Their peasant leaders took up the proud rank of *civis* or burgher and grew rich from their export of cattle.

#### Trade and Industry in the Royal Towns

During the second half of the fourteenth century, agricultural commodity production gave impetus to the development of handicrafts. After 1370, the first guilds were formed, and by the beginning of the fifteenth century they were found in practically all of the larger towns and boroughs. The agricultural production of a great many towns had decreased, and the relative share of handicrafts had increased. In about two dozen towns, numbering over 3,000–5,000 inhabitants, 25–30 per cent were artisans, and from two-thirds to three-quarters of them were full-time craftsmen engaged in 50 to 60 trades. In the fifteenth century, handicrafts became increasingly differentiated from agriculture. A new marketing region emerged around these towns, with a radius of 50–60 kilometres. On the weekly market-days commodities produced by the towns and foodstuffs produced by the villagers were exchanged. The rapid development of handicrafts threatened even the strict organization of the guilds; there were local attempts by rich merchants at organizing industrial production. The patricians of Bártfa, benefiting from the town's privileges in linen bleaching and the output of handicrafts by urban and rural domestic workers, developed a large-scale linen industry, which, by the middle of the fifteenth century, had created its own market, producing more than the imports from abroad. By the end of the fourteenth century, merchant capital was penetrating even the copper mines of the country.

With the development of wholesale markets in certain commodities, the internal struggles of the bourgeoisie intensified. The leadership of the towns by wealthy landowners was more and more questioned by the rich merchants, one-time craftsmen themselves, who engaged in the export of agricultural goods and the import of textiles. In Buda, Pozsony, Sopron and Kolozsvár their agitations won them representation on the councils. The artisans, who had backed these agitations, tried to seize power themselves, but the new patricians held them in check, at times invoking the help of the feudal ruling class; so the artisans had to be satisfied with forming 'outer' councils, as an apparent check to the 'inner' councils of the patricians.

King Sigismund relied on the rising merchants in his policy toward the towns and supported them, approving their accession to power within the towns. In 1405, an assembly of the royal towns was called together, along with the representatives of boroughs and privileged villages, making altogether 250 settlements. As a result of the discussions, a royal decree granted freedom to towns and other settlements able to fortify themselves by walls; autonomous jurisdiction was introduced, taxes were united and town merchants exempted from payment of tolls, foreign merchants were excluded from wholesale markets. The Buda system of measures was to be adopted throughout, and the free movement of peasants into towns was confirmed. The weaving of cotton cloth was concentrated by royal decree in Kassa, and linen bleaching in Kassa and Bártfa. These regulations, although inspired by the example of the more developed Italian and South German towns, answered the needs of local development.

Sigismund was the first, and also the last Hungarian king to recognize fully the importance of the towns, and consciously try to further their industrial growth. Contrary to the custom of the Anjou kings living in the fortified castles of Visegrád and Diósgyőr, he moved his seat to the largest Hungarian city, Buda, making it into the capital of the country. But he expected for too much from the measures he took, and when he saw that his revenues from the towns were not increasing sufficiently he soon withdrew his support. After 1410, boroughs were granted and pledged to the barons in great numbers. Not more than 30–35 towns out of those originally receiving the privileges of a free royal city were able to maintain their status, the rest had to accept the restricted autonomy of boroughs subjected to landlords. Subsequently, only a few boroughs were granted the status of a royal town, such as Pest and Szeged, two outstanding trading centres in the Great Plain. In these circumstances the bourgeoisie had to wait a long time before it could become a distinct class. Sigismund himself

gave up the idea of basing his central power on the towns, and by 1428 he had only bitter recollections of his experiment. After one abortive attempt to collect taxation he is reputed to have said: 'I wish there were no towns at all in my empire!'

### The Peasantry and the Hussite Movement

The development of craft industry and of a money economy induced the landlords to increase the burdens of the peasantry, especially their monetary obligations. The unbalanced economic policy of Sigismund, and his constant need of money resulted in the deterioration of the currency, which again hit the peasantry hardest. In answer to the new forms of exploitation, many peasants gave up their tenure, hired out their services to other land-owning peasants, or else moved into the towns. The villages abounded in untenanted land and the landlords, contrary to the royal decree, tried to force the peasants to stay.

The southern provinces, devastated during the dynastic struggles, suffered again owing to the renewal of the Turkish wars in 1416. The Turkish raiders plundered Transylvania and the southern areas year after year. The oppression of the landlords and the unceasing Turkish raids paved the way for the Hussite movement. Village and town clergy who had studied at the University of Prague began to preach the revolutionary doctrine. In 1432, peasant revolts started in the areas adjacent to Bohemia. The subsequent rising in Nagyszombat and the neighbouring countryside was organized by a Bohemian Hussite. Revolts soon broke out in the south and also in Transylvania.

At the request of the frightened ruling class, the Pope sent the Franciscan friar James of the Marches as inquisitor to Hungary, to stem the Hussite heresy. The inquisition dealt with Hussites and members of the Greek Orthodox Church alike, as the inquisitor wanted to bring the Serbs and Transylvanian Rumanians under the Church of Rome. With the help of the feudal lords, the inquisitor succeeded in extirpating the southern Hussite movement. The Hussites, with their priests, moved into Moldavia. The first translation of the Bible into Hungarian was made there by them. In Transylvania, on the other hand, oppression and the inquisition gave rise to a large-scale peasant uprising.

From both an economic and social point of view, Transylvania was the least developed province of Hungary. Consequently, the raising of feudal obligations was doubly grievous to the peasantry there. The clergy expected the tithe to be paid in money, and in a good currency,

too, at a time of primitive economic conditions and deteriorating currencies. The Orthodox Rumanian peasantry were embittered because they were also expected to pay the tithe, even though strictly it was due only from Roman Catholics. It was the last straw when the Bishop of Transylvania stipulated that arrears of tithes were to be paid in a currency worth more than the previous one. Those who refused were excommunicated. In 1437, the Hungarian and Rumanian peasants of Transylvania rose in several places in protest. Antal Budai Nagy, an impecunious Hungarian nobleman, assumed leadership. An unprepared feudal army sent against them was routed, and the treaty of Kolozsmonostor laid down that there should be free movement for the peasants, changes in the system of tithes, an end to the ninth and a reduction in money obligations. The peasants were also given the right to meet yearly to check whether the landlords had kept to their promises.

The ruling class, on the other hand, was unwilling to see its privileges curtailed. The Transylvanian nobility, the *Sekel* military leaders and the German or 'Saxon' patricians made an agreement called the 'Union of the Three Nations', a treaty of the privileged classes against the peasantry. The bishop tried to separate the petty nobility from the peasantry by recognizing their exemption from tithes. In fact, many of the lesser nobles betrayed the peasants. So, too, did the citizens of the towns, who at first had sympathized with the uprising. The counter-attack of the nobility, however, was not wholly successful. The previous concessions to the peasantry were renewed, although with less favourable conditions, and the right to arbitrate was left to the king. Sigismund had died in the meantime, and the nobility, seeing that owing to the long period of delay and uncertainty, the peasant army was beginning to disintegrate, launched a new attack. Antal Budai Nagy died in the battle of Kolozsvár, the city which sided with the uprising throughout. The other leaders were executed and the movement ruthlessly crushed.

### Gothic Art in Hungary

Economic development, increasing agricultural commodity production, mining and an expanding foreign trade all contributed during the fourteenth century to promote a flourishing cultural life under the influence of Late Gothic art. Cultural life in that period was still under ecclesiastical influence, mainly under that of the mendicant friars. The greatest historical work of the period, the *Illuminated*

Chronicle, a summary and continuation of earlier historical writings, was inspired by scholastic learning, especially by that of St. Thomas Aquinas. The thirteenth-century chroniclers had mainly been interested in social conflicts, while the historians of the fourteenth century sang the praises of the alliance between king and feudal society, of established order inside, and foreign conquest outside the realm. In these works the king is presented as an absolute ruler, and also the first among the knights, enjoying the devotion and respect of his loyal barons. The first original Hungarian courtly epics known to us (which are extant only in sixteenth-century variants) recount the adventures of the knights who toured Europe as retainers of Louis I and Sigismund. A late offspring of the French *chanson de geste* is the story of Miklós Toldi, a warrior of great physical strength who showed his bravery in the Neapolitan campaigns, while the history of Lőrinc Tar, who in 1411 visited the cave in Ireland known as the Purgatory of St. Patrick, attests to the growing interest shown by Hungarian noblemen in travels abroad.

Over and above the chronicles and songs of chivalry that were often not set down in writing but passed on orally, sermons and the legends of Hungarian saints, there were no original works of note in Hungarian in the literature of the fourteenth century. The early promise of vernacular poetry developed no further. The steady bold of the Latin tongue can be explained by the fact that no lay intellectual stratum had developed as in the Western European countries. The writing necessary to administration also contributed to the cultural monopoly of the Church. The clerks of the royal chancery were recruited from the clergy, and authoritative documents were issued not by a public notary but by authorized ecclesiastic institutions, such as chapters and convents (*loci credibiles*).

Ecclesiastical officials were educated abroad, no longer only in Paris and Italy, but, since the middle of the century, also in the newly established Central European universities of Vienna, Prague and Cracow. Louis I established a university at Pécs in 1367, but it soon ceased to exist. The *studium generale* started at Veszprém in the thirteenth century, and the university of Óbuda founded later by Sigismund, suffered the same fate.

Secular tendencies are more obvious in the arts. The king and the Church were responsible for the greatest number of buildings, and, after them, the feudal lords. The narrow, grim residential tower or keep was superseded by a more sumptuous building. The lord's castle and the auxiliary buildings were defended by a surrounding wall, with small turrets. Where space permitted, the main building was rectan-

gular, with a turret on each corner, and the dwelling quarters alongside the walls enclosed a large yard, which served for tournaments, very popular at the time. The castle of Diósgyőr, Louis I's favourite resort, was built on this plan, and imitated by István Lackfi, the most powerful aristocrat of the fourteenth century, when he built the castle of Tata.

The burghers, too, played their part in ecclesiastical building, as a great number of Gothic parish churches were erected through their efforts. At the same time, in the larger towns there were already stone houses with storeys, built in Gothic style, with small recesses in the vaulted doorways which were used for wine-selling. Present research suggests that the style of the Hungarian peasant house as it survives today took shape in this period. The peasant cottage of the twelfth century consisted of a single room, with an open fire-place dug into the earth. It was low and sooty, and remained the dwelling of the poor after the fourteenth century, while in the new houses of the well-to-do peasants the open fire used for cooking was in a separate room and the tile stove of the 'clean room' was fed from the kitchen to keep the former smokeless. The country nobility occupied similar houses, built occasionally of stone instead of earth and sometimes having many rooms.

As the style of dwelling improved, furnishings and clothing became more luxurious. The upper ruling class had silk hangings round the walls and the same covering on their carved wood furniture, which replaced the old stone furniture. They had settees, chairs, beds and carpets on the floor. The clothing of the Western European knight was not entirely adopted; the country nobility continued to wear the long tunic. It was obvious that there was plenty of gold and silver in the country from the trimming on clothes; silver buttons and buckles have been recovered, even from peasant graves.

The flourishing craft of silversmiths and coppersmiths produced conditions which enabled sculpture, independent of decoration on buildings, to be developed early in Hungary. None of the life-size statues of kings by Márton and György Kolozsvári in Nagyvárad have come down to us, but from their other surviving cast bronze works, the herma of St. Ladislas in Győr and the statue of St. George now in Prague, we can form an estimate of the realistic art of these two gifted pioneers of the early Renaissance. Hungarian art must have had close connections with the Italian Trecento, as evidenced both in the sumptuous buildings of the Hungarian ruling class, and the paintings of the humblest parish churches, with their passionate expression of human emotions. Although none of the paintings with

secular subjects that embellished the royal and feudal palaces have come down to us, their style is preserved in the miniatures of Miklós Meggyesi, the heraldic painter of Louis I, who illustrated the Illuminated Chronicle. The artistic trends of this period created conditions which enabled Hungary to become later one of the first centres of Renaissance art in Europe north of the Alps.

## 7. THE ALLIANCE OF THE MONARCHY WITH THE NOBILITY (1437-1458)

The anti-feudal movements had convinced the barons that political rights would have to be extended to the nobility and the upper stratum of the burghers. In 1435, the barons no longer prevented the calling of a diet, nor hindered the codification of the nobles' county jurisdiction. The development of a monarchy relying on the nobility was hastened not only by the common interests of the feudal class, but also by its internal contradictions.

### Tensions between Barons and Nobility

During the fifty years of Sigismund's rule there were tremendous changes in the pattern of land holding. On the death of Louis I, out of the roughly 22,000 towns and villages in the country, 15 per cent were owned by the king, 12 per cent by the Church, 53 per cent by the nobility, while the 60 most distinguished baronial families owned only 20 per cent. By the end of Sigismund's reign, only the proportion held by the Church remained the same, the other ratios changed considerably: the royal holding was down to 5 per cent, that of the nobility down to 43 per cent, while the 60 baronial families had increased their holding to 40 per cent, half of which was in the hands of the Garai-Cilli families. In concrete figures 2,250 royal and 2,000 noble parishes passed into the hands of the barons. Sigismund had ceded not only most of the royal estates to the barons, but also the actual administration of the country. Acting also as voivodes, *báns* and *ispáns*, they were permitted to collect royal taxes in their areas, and use the money for hiring mercenaries. Many new barons were created during the reign of Sigismund from among the nobility (such as Ujlaki, Thallóczi, Rozgonyi, Perényi, Pálóczi, Hédervári, Csáki and Hunyadi). They were granted considerable possessions as a reward for their military services rendered with armies equipped from public moneys. The military and political independence of the barons was

greatest in the southern part of the country, where the Turks were a threat; there power was concentrated, during the first thirty years of the fifteenth century, in the hands of a few powerful barons, notably the Garai and Cilli and the emerging Ujlaki and Csáki families.

The most powerful barons maintained a considerable administrative machinery, with military, economic and legal advisers, and a chancery with a large number of notaries, employed to draft documents. The latter were recruited from the educated elements of the nobility, who, like Sigismund's retinue, accompanied their lords on their journeys as privy councillors. Sigismund's new proposals in favour of the towns and counties and against the barons originated from his clerks who came in part from the nobility and partly from burgher families.

The raising of the cultural level of the nobility created a new educated class. The greater productivity of peasant labour, concomitant with an increasing exploitation of it, provided the material means for the middle and well-to-do nobility to buy new commodities, sometimes of foreign origin, and enabled them to send their sons to good schools at home and abroad. From the middle of the fourteenth century, three Central European universities, Vienna, Prague and Cracow, provided educational opportunities not too far from Hungary. In the early fifteenth century, many Hungarians were designated as *litteratus*, while others gained academic titles, i.e. *baccalaureus* and *magister*. A large number of Hungarian names appear in the university registers. The Latin schools in Hungary also provided the legal knowledge needed in municipal, county and royal offices. The better-educated nobility were granted posts in the enlarged county administration after Sigismund's reforms, and more opportunities arose for secular notaries to find employment in the authorized ecclesiastic institutions (*loci credibiles*), thus breaking the Church's previous monopoly of education.

Though striving to obtain these new posts, the nobles directed their main energies toward the acquisition of more land. In this they were greatly hampered by the baronial expansion, which excluded them from the possibility of obtaining royal grants of land, and even threatened them with the loss of their existing holdings. The fate of the poorer members of the nobility, who lost their lands and were compelled to take the plots of the peasants and work them with the sweat of their brows, was a grave warning. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, there were thousands of such impoverished nobles; their situation was aggravated by the attitude of both Church and State, which regarded them as peasants and expected taxes from them. Some moved into the towns, working as artisans or making use of their meagre knowledge of Latin to draft occasional documents, others

became itinerant clerks, constantly on the move, or else joined bands of robbers, becoming outlaws themselves.

The educated elements in the royal administration of Sigismund gave voice both to the dissatisfaction and to the ambitions of the nobility in the royal decree of 1435. Among other things it also contains a new definition of the state: 'the whole body of the Kingdom of Hungary is represented by the high clergy, the barons and the nobility'. The protagonist of this new concept of the state was János Vitéz, a young clerk in Sigismund's privy chancery and the pioneer of humanistic learning in Hungary. It was mainly due to his judgement and diplomatic skill that the political aspirations of the nobility were triumphant in the unruly years following the death of Sigismund. He was an advocate of the rights of the nobility but joined them in the interest of royal power, as he was convinced that the Turkish menace could only be checked by a strong centralized monarchy in union with the nobility against baronial abuse.

#### The Monarchy and the Estates

In 1437, Sigismund's son-in-law, Albert of Habsburg, the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Bohemia, was recognized as King of Hungary without baronial opposition. But the barons exacted a severe price for withholding opposition, obtaining the right to sanction land grants, the appointment of new office-holders and the use of royal revenues, while leaving the defence of the country wholly to the king. Sigismund's advisers, both burghers and noblemen who were retained in Albert's service, admonished him to shake off baronial tutelage with the help of the nobility. This was the background of the diet of 1439, where the nobility, encouraged by the king's advisers, defeated the barons and annulled the conditions under which Albert was made king. The use of the royal revenues and the appointment of office-holders passed back into the control of the king, with the exception of the palatine, whose appointment required the consent of both barons and nobility.

Albert was not able to avail himself of the new rights granted by the diet, as in the same year he fell victim to the same plague which foiled his campaign against the Turks. After his death, the Garai-Cilli faction supported the claims of Albert's widow Elizabeth, and his posthumous son, Ladislas. In opposition, the new aristocracy which had emerged under Sigismund, demanded an end to the German-Bohemian connection, which they considered a burden and no help in the wars against



the Turks, and the dismissal of the Garai-Cilli faction. They invited Wladislaw III, King of Poland, to the throne. In due course, war broke out between the two sides. The supporters of Wladislaw (1440-1444) won the day, but the new king remained unrecognized by the supporters of Ladislas Habsburg, who placed one part of the country under the protection of the infant Ladislas's guardian, Frederick III, the Holy Roman Emperor, while Slavonia and Croatia were ruled *de facto* by Ulrich Cilli, and the northern counties by Jiskra, the Bohemian mercenary of Queen Elizabeth.

Wladislaw's position was strengthened by the military achievements of János Hunyadi. Hunyadi came from a Transylvanian Rumanian noble family, but was thought by his contemporaries to be the natural son of Sigismund. He had lived in Sigismund's court since he was a young boy, accompanying the king on his journeys, and had spent some time in Italy as a *condottiere*. Well trained in mercenary warfare, he was successful against the Turks and King Albert placed him at the head of the Banate of Szörény. Wladislaw regarded him as the real leader against the Turks and appointed him voivode of Transylvania and *ispán* of Temes. With the exception of Slavonia and Croatia, which was in the hands of the Cillis, the whole of the south of the country was entrusted to Hunyadi and his friend, Miklós Ujlaki, *bán* of Macsó.

With the consolidation of the leading role of the nobility, the political conditions for a successful resistance to the Turks had been created. János Vitéz, as protonotary and the real head of the royal chancery, won over King Wladislaw to the idea of an alliance with the nobility. At the diet of 1440, the king reaffirmed the political rights of the nobility, as expressed in the more than two-hundred-year-old Golden Bull, and the legal decrees of Andrew III, Louis I and Sigismund, thus laying down the constitutional foundations of a state based on the alliance between king and nobility. From then on, the diet sat each year, or sometimes twice a year, taking over from the royal council the making of decisions on political questions. Henceforth, in royal decrees the consent of the nobility, as well as that of the high clergy and barons, is always mentioned: no law could be codified without it. The royal towns were also represented in the diet; their weight, however, was not great, compared with that of the two feudal estates.

The order of the nobility, however, was still not an equal partner with the high clergy and baronage. Their position as vassals of the barons kept a considerable part of the nobility under baronial influence. Neither the power nor the class-consciousness of the nobility was strong enough for them to take independent political action, and

it was only in unison with the king (that they could oppose the barons. János Vitéz and his circle cultivated this alliance, but the king, deprived of resources and threatened by a rival claimant to his throne, was not strong enough to give the nobles the support needed to bring them under his influence. Compromise became inevitable; the king was forced to seek an alliance with the baronial faction which had obtained the support of the majority of the nobility. It was incontestable that in such a partnership the leading role would be played by the barons, or rather the most powerful among them.

### Hunyadi's Wars against the Turks

It was fortunate for Hungary that János Hunyadi was its most powerful baron. Wladislaw rewarded his commander-in-chief with unprecedented gifts, and within a short time, his wealth surpassed that of any other baron. His authority and popularity attracted the support not only of the anti-Habsburg barons, but even of the nobility. His friendship with János Vitéz secured him close ties with the court. After concluding an armistice with the Habsburg party based on a territorial status quo, Wladislaw could turn his attention to the Turkish war.

Hunyadi obtained neither money nor manpower from the king. He organized and equipped an army from the revenue of his own estates and from the taxes collected in the districts under his jurisdiction. The core of his army was made up of Bohemian Hussite mercenaries. In addition, Hunyadi could rely on his own adherents, his relatives and his vassals of noble rank. As a last resort he also enlisted peasant elements in great number against the Turks. His first victory was achieved with their help against the Turkish army, which had invaded Transylvania in 1442.

Later in the same year, Sultan Murad II sent an army of hundred thousand men against Transylvania to reverse this defeat. Hunyadi crossed the Carpathians with an army of 15,000 Sekels and mercenaries and launched an unexpected attack. For the first time he employed the Hussite tactics of setting up harricades of wagons on the flanks of his army. The prolonged heavy fighting was finally decided when an attack was started on the Turkish flank by the wagons with mounted guns.

For the first time a sizable Turkish army had suffered a crushing defeat in Europe. The news of Hunyadi's victory travelled far and the hope of final delivery for those suffering under the Turkish yoke in

the Balkans was revived. Hunyadi was no longer satisfied with successful defence, and wanted to strike the enemy in his own home, to get to the roots of the Turkish menace. He persuaded the king himself to head the campaign. After repeated victories in the autumn of 1443, he occupied Nish, then Sofia and proceeded towards Adrianople. In the mountains he found himself face to face with the Turkish army, with the passes blocked by the enemy. The difficult terrain and a severe winter finally forced the Hungarian army to retreat. The peoples of the Balkans, hoping to be freed, awaited Hunyadi's return, ready to join in the fighting. But the war was halted and Wladislaw signed a treaty with the sultan's emissaries at Szeged. At the instigation of the papal legate, however, Wladislaw broke his word and launched a new attack, but foreign support failed to materialize and he was crushed by the Turks at Varna in 1444. The king fell in battle and Hunyadi himself had the greatest difficulty in escaping.

The diet of 1445 recognized the succession of Ladislas of Habsburg on condition that Frederick III release him and the crown of Hungary. Frederick, however, did not comply. The diet of the following year, due to the well-organized campaign of János Vitéz, then Bishop of Várad, acclaimed Hunyadi as regent of Hungary. The success of the Hunyadi party and Hunyadi's unquestioned authority were based on the support of the nobility. Hunyadi did not prove to be ungrateful. New decrees were passed by the diet to curb the power of the baronial county administration in favour of the nobility, and in the royal court new jurors from the nobility were elected. This, however, did not lead to the strengthening of the central power since Hunyadi did not possess all the royal prerogatives and even the nobility within the diet were reluctant to grant them to him. During the sessions of the diet Hunyadi was expected to divest himself of his power, and attend with the same status as any member of the baronage. He was not granted power to extort obedience from Cilli and Jiskra.

In those circumstances, it was impossible to concentrate sufficient strength against the Turks. Nevertheless, Hunyadi made another attempt to attack, but was defeated on the field of Kossovo in Serbia, owing to the treachery of George Brankovich, a Serbian despot who was Cilli's father-in-law, and the delay of the Albanian leader, Skanderbeg, in 1448. He was captured while trying to escape by Brankovich, and was released only after making an agreement with him and Cilli. In 1450, the Palatine László Garai and Miklós Ujlaki joined the alliance. It was finally sealed with the betrothal of Hunyadi's two sons, Ladislas and Matthias, to the daughters of Garai and Cilli respectively. The only advantage gained by this alliance was a successful

appeal to Frederick III, supported in 1453 by a common movement of the Austrian and Bohemian nobility, for the release of the young king, Ladislas of Habsburg.

### **Clash between the King and the Hunyadi Party**

King Ladislas V (1440–1457) appointed Hunyadi his commander-in-chief and royal treasurer, and made him the beneficiary of numerous distinctions and grants. The king, however, was completely under the influence of Cilli, his relative. Jealous of Hunyadi, Cilli entered into a new alliance with the Palatine Garai and with Ujlaki, their obvious aim being the overthrow of Hunyadi. János Vitéz, the king's chief chancellor, was faced with a dilemma. As a staunch opponent of baronial power and an advocate of centralization, his position and principles obliged him to continue as the supporter of royal power and turn against his old friend, Hunyadi. In 1454, he drafted a scheme, authorized by the king, according to which the government of the country was transferred from the hands of the barons into the hands of a council made up of paid officials. Royal revenues were to be handled by the same body. Hunyadi protested, the plan for centralization failed, and Hunyadi was confirmed in his old offices mainly because of the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and Sultan Mohammed II's preparations to attack Hungary.

In 1456, a Turkish army of a hundred thousand men started to besiege Nándorfehérvár, the present Belgrade. The king fled abroad and the barons held back. Hunyadi with his small army went to face the formidable enemy outnumbering his troops ten to one. The Pope announced a crusade and sent Giovanni Capistrano, a Franciscan friar, to Hungary. His moving sermons, translated by Hungarian Franciscans, mobilized the people of the southern provinces. Soon some 20,000 crusaders joined Hunyadi's army. The Turks, after first breaking holes in the city walls, launched their decisive attack on 21 July. But the attack was repulsed. The following day the crusaders, eager to fight, broke out and attacked the enemy. The bloody battle continued into the night, until at last the exhausted Turkish army abandoned their quarters and fled.

This unprecedented victory drove the Turks from Hungarian soil for seventy years, but Hunyadi, soon after his victory, fell a victim to the plague which was decimating his army. After his death, the barons allied with Cilli believed that the time was ripe for crushing the Hunyadi party. The first step was to try to get rid of Hunyadi's sons,

Ladislás and Matthias. After Ulrich Cilli fell victim to a murder attempt by members of the Hunyadi party in the spring of 1457, the Hunyadi brothers were called to Buda by ruse, and Ladislás Hunyadi, charged with complicity in the murder, was executed. Hunyadi's widow, Erzsébet Szilágyi, and her brother, Mihály Szilágyi, organized an armed opposition. Ladislás V fled from the troubled scene to Prague, taking Matthias Hunyadi with him as a hostage. Here, the young king met his unexpected death in the same year. This event cleared the way for the election of a new king in both Hungary and Bohemia.

The Hunyadi party and the nobility favoured the election of Matthias as king of Hungary. During his imprisonment in Prague he had become betrothed to the daughter of George Podiebrad, regent and later King of Bohemia, and thereby he regained his freedom. A diet met in January 1458 to elect the new king. Mihály Szilágyi led a large army of mercenaries to Buda and on the frozen Danube the assembled nobility also moved menacingly towards the castle where the barons were meeting. The citizens cheered Matthias, and the barons, not daring to defy the consensus of opinion, elected him. The diet appointed Mihály Szilágyi, the uncle of the fifteen-year-old king, as regent.

## 8. AN EXPERIMENT IN CENTRALIZED GOVERNMENT (1458-1490)

### *The Success of Matthias Hunyadi's Policy of Centralization*

The young Matthias Hunyadi had two men to support him: his uncle, Mihály Szilágyi, the regent and leader of the Hunyadi party, and his tutor, János Vitéz, the chief chancellor, an old enemy of baronial policy, and an adherent of centralized government. The terms of the election had stipulated safe-conduct for the members of the Garai party and the abolition of the only considerable source of royal revenue, the levying of war taxes, which had been granted from time to time by the diet. Had Matthias reconciled himself to this he would have become the prisoner of the barons. However, Vitéz warily watched the first steps of his royal pupil and saw to it that he did not do so. Matthias soon forced his uncle to resign his office as regent, thus making clear that he did not wish to rule as the party's puppet.

The barons, afraid of strong rule, united and Szilágyi, Garai and Ujlaki formed an alliance in defence of their interests. Matthias, on the other hand, was not reluctant to imprison his uncle for this rebellion, and when he was released sent him against the Turks. The old warrior then atoned with his death for his misdeeds. Garai and his allies, however, continued their resistance without him and in 1459 offered the throne to the Habsburg Emperor Frederick III. Matthias won to his side those barons who feared the rise of the Garai party, and with the death of László Garai, soon afterwards the whole conspiracy collapsed.

The united forces of the ruling class were then turned by Matthias against Jiskra. The powerful mercenary, who had remained uncrushed by János Hunyadi, was now compelled to submit. He handed over his castles to the king and was given estates in exchange in the southern part of the country. He was subsequently able to find an outlet for his overheated ambitions in the service of the king. In 1463, Frederick III offered peace. He returned the Hungarian crown, but retained some of the border territory he had occupied and demanded the recognition of his right to the succession should Matthias die childless. This was the price paid for the security of the country, political unity

within Hungary, and the possibility of attack instead of defence on the southern border.

Bosnia, a nominal dependency of the Hungarian Crown, was occupied by the Turks early in 1463. Matthias issued orders for the baronial *banderia* to take up arms. To their 12,000 men he added his modest royal army of 2,500 mercenaries, and together they occupied the fortress of Jajce, thus restoring Hungarian sovereignty in the northern part of Bosnia. In the following year Sultan Mohammed II personally launched an attack against Jajce, but Matthias's army forced him to retreat. At the same time Pius II announced a new crusade against the Turks under his personal leadership. Matthias was encouraged to advance in Bosnia, but owing to the sudden death of the Pope, the crusaders dispersed, and the small Hungarian army was stopped by the overwhelming number of the Turks. Matthias returned from the campaign having recognized that the forces of Hungary only sufficed for defence, and that the great plan of János Hunyadi to expel the Turks from Europe could only be accomplished with wide European cooperation.

Matthias's successes in foreign policy rested on the results of centralized rule. His royal power was based on the support of the nobility against the baronage; consequently he tried to weaken the institution of vassalage (*familiaritas*) which had tied barons and noblemen together. He took away the barons' right to engage mercenaries, and prevented them from using royal taxes to recruit retainers for their private armies. Noble retainers in the baronial service were removed from baronial jurisdiction and placed under county and royal justices. He also reformed the judiciary by raising the personal jurisdiction of the king above that of the palatine and chief justice, and by appointing expert lawyers to the royal court.

A hired army and a paid administration were costly, and Matthias could only raise money by taking back from the barons royal revenues which they had either been granted or had taken by force. He was successful in the new venture. While Ladislas V's revenues in Hungary were hardly more than 200,000 gold florins, Matthias, towards the end of his reign, was raising about one million. The treasury was run by expert officials, which put an end to baronial tax collection and embezzlement.

Nevertheless, his revenues were barely sufficient for the strengthening of the achievements of centralized rule. Matthias, unlike absolute rulers in the Western countries, could not fall back on the financial support of the bourgeoisie. He could pay only his soldiers in money;

his officials were rewarded by ecclesiastical offices and grants of land, and thus unwittingly he increased the number of feudal lords, the natural enemies of centralization.

### Foreign Capital in Hungarian Trade

Matthias was fully conscious of the political and economic importance of the towns. It was during his reign that the development of the citizens of the towns into a distinct political body was completed. The seven most important royal towns, Buda, Pozsony, Sopron, Nagyszombat, Kassa, Eperjes and Bártfa (later joined by Pest), had earlier been given separate courts of justice under the Lord Treasurer, with some members of the nobility amongst the jurors. Under a decree issued by Matthias, these courts were transformed into institutions presided over exclusively by the burghers. Other royal towns, such as Székesfehérvár, Esztergom, Lőcse, and later Szeged and Kolozsvár, were put under personal royal jurisdiction without any baronial intervention. It was also during Matthias's reign that the mining towns were given corporate autonomy. Although representatives of the towns continued to play a secondary role in the diet, the towns became entirely free from baronial interference, and were directly under royal supervision. The Hungarian towns, however, needed protection not only from feudal oppression but also from the competition of foreign capital.

By the middle of the fifteenth century, the volume of imports grew considerably. After 1450, the royal revenue from customs duties on imported foreign goods grew fivefold in a period of three decades. Seventy-five per cent of the imports from Western countries were textiles and 20 per cent metal goods. Spices were also important items. Ninety-eight per cent of the Hungarian exports were agricultural and mining products, mainly cattle, wine and copper. Due to its staple right Vienna played an important part in Hungary's foreign trade; it was there that South German cloth merchants bringing their wares met the Hungarian merchants driving their cattle and carrying copper. Hungarian trade with Northern Europe was mainly in the hands of merchants from Breslau and Cracow, interested not only in cattle and copper but also in Hungarian wine. The greatest attraction for foreign traders continued to be Hungarian gold. In the fifteenth century, the annual foreign trade deficit of Hungary averaged 200,000-300,000 gold florins, which left the country as currency and returned as foreign commodities.

Western industry, already managed at that time by capitalist entrepreneurs, was producing cheaper and better goods than the Hungarian guilds, which were still in the developing stage. Hungarian merchants considered it a quicker and safer investment to take part in foreign trade or to buy land than to engage in the development of domestic industry with its remote and uncertain chances of profit. Moreover, their capital, on the comparative scale of medieval trade, was small. A thousand-florin capital counted as exceptionally large in Hungary, while the 16 richest burghers of Augsburg owned capital totalling half a million. Because of this lack of capital, the Hungarian merchants had to rely for credit on the South German traders, whose money was dominant in Hungarian foreign trade, so that in point of fact the Hungarian merchant was a mere agent. About the middle of the fifteenth century, the merchants of Pozsony mortgaged their real estate to the extent of 65,000 florins; the South German credit was equivalent to the combined fortunes of the bourgeoisie of the town. In 1489, about half the credit in the account books of the merchants of Cracow was lent out to the merchants of Kassa. In the circumstances it is evident that the bourgeoisie could not accumulate capital, the wealthier merchants preferring to leave the country, or buy land and become members of the feudal class.

Owing to the fact that foreign goods were reaching the country in unlimited quantities, industrialization in the Hungarian towns halted in the middle of the fifteenth century. Capitalist ventures at industrialization died off, and the domestic mining enterprises closed down one after the other. In 1475, János Thurzó, in association with the merchants of Cracow and South Germany, started to free the Hungarian copper mines from flooding. During the course of this he was able to buy many mines from the impecunious owners. But even his capital was not large enough, and it was only later, in partnership with the Fuggers, that the enormous business was started which soon produced transactions in Hungarian copper running into millions on the world market. At the end of the century, South German capital, after taking over most of Hungary's foreign trade, penetrated Hungarian mining as well.

#### **Setback in the Development of the Towns**

In the fifteenth century, agricultural production was centred around the boroughs, with produce coming in mostly from peasant tenures. There were over 800 of these boroughs and, about the end of the

century, one-sixth of the peasant population, i.e. approximately half a million (out of the country's four million inhabitants), lived in these settlements numbering about 500-1,000 each. The development of the borough out of the village was one form of the stratification of the peasantry. The landlords' income originated first of all from taxes levied on the boroughs. In the fifteenth century, the tendency to commute taxes in kind to money rents became general. Lump-sum money payment was demanded from the boroughs, and payment by the peasantry was also expected in money. The simultaneous increase in peasant production and exploitations by the landlord contributed to the break-up of the peasantry into different strata. Up to the middle of the fourteenth century, the peasant had as much land as could be worked by himself and his family, but by the fifteenth century the majority of the peasantry owned only half a tenure, or even less, and at least 20 per cent owned only a small cottage and garden. Some of the peasants were landless but for an occasional small vineyard. Those peasants who had become rich, mainly those living in the boroughs, became the upper stratum possessing an ever growing part of the means of production and employing the poorer elements of their kind as hired labourers.

The stratification of the peasantry into rich and poor created the preconditions of capitalist production in agriculture. Further development, however, was prevented by the decline of industrialization in the royal towns. Between 1450 and 1500, the population of the most flourishing commercial towns, such as Buda, Pozsony, Sopron, Kassa and Eperjes, decreased by 10-20 per cent, and their tax contributions declined by about 30 per cent. Less and less agricultural produce was sold on the town markets, all the more so as the townsmen were trying to make up for their losses in manufactures by becoming agricultural producers themselves. The decline of the home market for agricultural produce could not be made up by any amount of increased cattle and wine exports. The capital behind the cattle and wine export, though in the hands of the richer peasants living in the boroughs, came directly or indirectly from the South German creditors; the same was true for the cloth import. In comparison with the busy nature of commerce, there was very little circulation of money in the country. Well-to-do peasants continued to pay the wages of their labourers in kind, by a share of the produce. This considerably retarded a general commutation of services and tithes to money rent, which was much desired by the ecclesiastical and temporal feudal lords, themselves obliged to pay for foreign goods in currency. Thus the exploitation of the peasants became greater and it was not rare to find all the inhabitants of a village



leaving in order to escape from the tax collector. Matthias was persuaded by the nobility temporarily to stop the free movement of the peasants by decree for a year or two, though he himself was opposed to the wish of the barons and nobility to bind the peasant to the land.

### Attempts to Establish a Central European Empire

Matthias himself was not unaware that the peasantry could bear no further burdens, just as he soon came to realize that neither were the towns able to grant the financial support he expected. If not fully conscious of the momentum of South German capital penetrating into Eastern Europe, he could not help seeing that the money necessary for his plans for centralization was being taken out of the country by the foreign merchants. It was evident where the money leaving the country could best be stopped: at the towns of Vienna and Breslau. The possession of these two towns would mean the control of the whole Central and East European trade, with a share in the profits, provided the ruler could, at the same time, master feudal anarchy in Austria and Silesia. Matthias believed himself strong enough to conquer Austria and Bohemia, uniting them with Hungary in a centralized monarchy.

He was not alone among Central European rulers in his ambitions to found an empire. Casimir IV, King of Poland, the son-in-law of Albert of Habsburg, had a claim to the throne of Hungary and Bohemia, as did the Habsburg Frederick III. At that time the Central European states were already united by economic and dynastic ties, their political union was only a question of time. The majority of the Hungarian ruling class, on the other hand, did not approve of the war launched against Bohemia in 1468. It was preceded by the most severe form of taxation: Matthias imposed extra taxes upon the peasants, and loans, never to be repaid, upon the towns. The landlords, on the other hand, could not get the services from their exhausted tenants. In 1467, a baronial faction planned to depose Matthias, but the conspiracy was uncovered by the king. In 1471, another, more serious conspiracy, headed by János Vitéz, came to the same end. Six years earlier, the former tutor of Matthias had been elevated to the highest office of feudal Hungary, being appointed Archbishop of Esztergom, but after that a rift developed between the old politician and his now independent pupil. As a prelate he resented the confiscation of church revenue and extra taxation; as the ideologist of the war against the Turks, he grudged giving up what he regarded as the only just and

necessary war for needless adventures. These reasons made him the head of the conspiracy which invited Casimir, a son of the Polish king, to the throne. For reasons of state, Matthias imprisoned Vitéz, and then, for reasons of affection, he released him; but the aged statesman did not long survive his humiliation. After the failure of the conspiracy, the Polish pretender, who had entered Hungary at the head of a small army, hurriedly left the country.

Supported by the Catholic nobility of Moravia and Silesia, Matthias was crowned King of Bohemia in 1469. In 1471, however, at the death of George Podiebrad, the Bohemian nobility recognized the Polish prince Wladislaw Jagiello, who had promised toleration to the Hussites, as King of Bohemia. He then formed an alliance with Frederick III against Matthias. In 1474, the united Polish and Bohemian armies broke into Silesia, and besieged Breslau, with Matthias behind its walls. The siege was soon given up and in 1478, in the Treaty of Olmütz, both Matthias and Wladislaw recognized each other as Kings of Bohemia, and the country was divided, with Matthias retaining Moravia and Silesia.

Matthias succeeded through diplomacy in isolating Frederick III, owing to his friendly ties with the Swiss Confederation, the Italian princes and Ivan III, Grand Duke of Muscovy. His famous 'Black Army' of 20,000 horsemen, 8,000 infantry, 5,000 wagons and a newly created artillery, all in full pay, together with the *banderia* of the Hungarian baronage, crushed Habsburg resistance in continuous and relentless siege warfare. In the summer of 1485, after half a year's siege, Vienna fell, and, with the exception of the Tyrol and Upper Austria, the Austrian provinces of the Habsburgs fell into Matthias's hands. He thereupon transferred his seat from Buda to Vienna.

### The Programme of the Absolute Monarchy

Matthias introduced centralized administration into the newly occupied provinces. Even the independent principalities in Silesia were subjected to the royal power. There were swift results: taxes were lowered in Hungary and political tension lessened. The way was clear for another major step in the direction of centralization: an attempt to free the royal power from the control, not only of the barons, but of the whole feudal ruling class. After 1471, the diet was called only on rare occasions by Matthias, and he exercised his authority by royal decree. In the royal council the baronial members hardly ever functioned, as matters were handled by the royal secretaries. His officials, the



officers of the chancery and treasury, were by preference intellectuals of bourgeois and peasant stock, not even noblemen; his private secretaries, Péter Váradi, later chancellor, and Tamás Bakócz, were of peasant descent; his treasurers, György Handó and Orbán Dóczy, were from the towns. He also liked to employ foreigners, free of local influence.

A uniformity in outlook, characteristic of officials in Matthias's administration, was due to their humanist culture. Many of them were actively engaged in writing fashionable humanist compositions, such as letters, occasional poems or history, while all succumbed to the passion of book collecting. They were brought up mainly in Italian schools, in that late period of humanist culture which no longer represented the uncompromisingly anti-feudal efforts of the bourgeoisie but tried to bring bourgeois aspiration under the wing of the feudal state power, thereby forging theoretical weapons in support of centralization, or else for absolute government. The culture of Matthias's officials of bourgeois and peasant stock made them supporters of centralization, to which they were attached in any case by personal and class interests. Without formulating political theory, one can clearly see their views from the rules of the royal chancery, from the attitude of court historians toward the past and from recorded statements of theirs.

Matthias and his humanist circle were aiming at the highest form of centralization: absolute monarchy. 'The king himself is no slave or tool to the law, he is above it, ruling over it'—this statement was attributed by the Italian humanist Brandolinus to Matthias himself, and we have no reason to doubt its authenticity, less so as the law of 1468 clearly speaks of the absolute power (*absoluta potestas*) due to the king. According to Brandolinus, Matthias distinctly disapproved of the republican government of certain Italian cities and of the tyranny of rich over poor; he did not tolerate in his monarchy that anyone 'should be unjust at the expense of others, or that anyone should form a party'. 'In our country,' he said, 'no one can have too much confidence in his own power, or lose too much of his confidence due to his helplessness... No one should possess so much as to deprive others of the necessities of life, no one should abound in unnecessary things.' The 'social' character of Matthias's absolutism, although exaggerated by Brandolinus, clearly shows his desire to keep the classes counter-balancing each other.

The principle of justice was applied by Matthias in a sense unknown in Hungarian history. He threatened his favourite, Bishop Miklós Báthory, one of the leading Hungarian humanists, that if he

did not give up torturing his tenants, he would be thrown into the Danube. This story and others like it, inspired a belief that Matthias went about in disguise to find out what wrongs had been done to the people by the barons, and the epithet 'just' was added to his name. 'Governors in our country,' he told Brandolinus, 'are only temporary servants,' and, indeed, he acted accordingly, by dismissing and imprisoning his advisers at the summit of their powers, if they became unworthy of his trust.

### Matthias's Compromises with the Ruling Class

From his plans and achievements it seems that Matthias's absolutism was greater in theory than in practice. His economic power could only be based on his Central European empire, which in its turn depended on the Hungarian ruling class, and, as a natural consequence, he had to make concessions at the expense of absolutism. They could not be avoided, as opposition to his centralized rule never ceased to exist; it may have temporarily moved underground, but gained new force by the alliance of the newly created barons and the nobility. The fact was brought home to Matthias by the political activities of the Zápolyai family. In the field of military and financial organization, Imre Zápolyai and his brother István were among Matthias's ablest officials. As former members of the impecunious nobility, they had speedily risen to find their place amongst the richest barons. It was around them that those who were dissatisfied with the new rule by decrees gathered, hoping for a restoration of the diets. Matthias was obliged to retreat and assume a realistic position as was put forward by János Vitéz, consonant with conditions in Hungary. In 1486, he called a diet which voted new privileges to the nobility. County autonomy was again recognized with the stipulation that the baronial *ispán* should appoint his deputy from the local well-to-do nobility, and not from his own retainers. This was the first step towards making this *alispán* the representative of the nobility and not of the barons. The nobility even went a step further; although recognizing the king's 'absolute power', they requested that in case of a misunderstanding between the king and the diet, the palatine should mediate the dispute. This was accorded, the palatine becoming not only the king's deputy but the defender of the rights of the nobility. The diet appointed Imre Zápolyai as the new palatine.

So far Matthias had succeeded in compromising with the nobility without conceding any of his actual rights, but the new provision for

the appointment of the palatine was a blow to absolutism. Matthias endeavoured to outweigh it by consolidating Hungary's leadership in Central European political integration. In his last years he worked in that direction.

He did not succeed, however, in making himself Holy Roman Emperor; in the year following the occupation of Vienna, Maximilian I of Habsburg became emperor, having been previously ruler of Burgundy and the Netherlands. Though pushed out of one part of Austria, the Habsburgs obtained new power in the German Empire, and with Maximilian a new, energetic person began to manage the affairs of the family. Nor did Jagiello expansionism stop entirely. Both dynasties had a claim to the throne of Hungary. Left without a legal heir, Matthias appointed his natural son, János Corvinus, as his successor in Hungary and Bohemia, and tried to obtain Maximilian's support by promising the return of Austria. Maximilian seemed willing to negotiate, but Matthias, although not yet fifty years old, died unexpectedly in Vienna in the spring of 1490.

His reign marks the zenith of Hungarian feudalism. An exceptionally gifted personality, in exceptionally favourable circumstances, he had achieved the highest form of centralization as well as extensive foreign conquests, all in three decades. After his death the political edifice collapsed, but the memory of his great achievements has survived in the creative works of the Hungarian Renaissance and humanism.

### The Renaissance and Humanism in Hungary

Humanism in Hungary flourished in the royal chancery and was connected from the start with efforts toward centralization. Its originator was the outstanding Florentine humanist, Pier-Paolo Vergerio, who was active in the chancery from 1417 onwards, and greatly influenced his colleagues, especially János Vitéz. The humanist patriotism of Vitéz owes much to his initiation by Vergerio: the confrontation of human values (*humanitas, virtus*) with birth and rank, and the identification of the defence of human values with defence against the Turks. The idea of the real patriot was enlarged and was no longer confined to the barons, but spread also to the nobility, the bourgeoisie, the peasantry, or to anybody engaged in the noble contest with pen or sword. Humanist educational ideas clearly mingle with the political, military and organizational aims of the nobility in the diplomatic correspondence and speeches made by Vitéz at home and abroad, propagating unity against the Turks. He was also the

first to be engaged in the humanist passion of collecting books for his library. An avid builder, he collected scholars and artists around him, and although he himself was never able to go to Italy, he sent many Hungarian youths there for their education.

One of these was his nephew, known as Janus Pannonius in humanist literature. Son of a carpenter from the southern part of the country, he rose to become Bishop of Pécs and the first great Hungarian poet, and one of the greatest European poets of the time. With his artistic instinct, he introduced human passions and emotions into the then declining and formalistic humanist poetry. His satirical epigrams openly ridiculed fanaticism, asceticism, clerical greed and credulity, without sparing even the sanctity of the Pope. His elegies, on the other hand, bewail the fate of the poet, isolated in barbarian Scythian surroundings, but inviting the muses to the banks of the Danube. A number of other poems proudly speak of the noble task of the Hungarians as defenders of Europe against the Turks, and of the deeds of their leaders, the Hunyadis. The patriotism of Janus Pannonius is basically the same as that of Vitéz, but he is more critical. He was also inspired by the anti-Turkish and anti-German feelings of his contemporaries, but disliked war as not being congenial to poetic inspiration. He expected speedy victory over the Turks and peace for his country to enjoy the blessings of culture. It is no wonder that Janus Pannonius was among the first to join Vitéz's conspiracy against Matthias's northern expeditions, and he was also the only one who did not expect mercy. He met his death while escaping in 1472.

The conspiracy of Vitéz and Janus Pannonius had made Matthias for a time suspicious of the Hungarian humanists, but he did not want to miss the blessings of humanist culture. He invited foreign, mainly Italian, humanists to his court. One of them, Antonio Bonfini, wrote a history of Hungary in elegant humanistic Latin; another, Galeotto Marzio, recorded Matthias's witty sayings. János Thuróczy, by profession a judge of the royal court, wrote a history of the period. Although a man of acute intelligence, he was only on the fringe of the humanistic court circle, his education being somewhat less refined. In his chronicle, there is a curious mixture of the humanist conception of the role of heroic virtue in opposition to fate in moulding history and the nationalism of the nobility in its xenophobia, making the Hungarians the successors of the world-conquering Scythians and Huns, and celebrating Matthias as a 'second Attila'. Thuróczy is the representative of the class-conscious nobility, emerging victorious under Matthias from the crisis earlier in the century.

On the king's orders, Thuróczy's chronicle was twice reissued. Matthias hastened to make the newly invented printing press the instrument of his political propaganda. Posters were printed against Frederick III. At the instigation of one of his officials, the first Hungarian press was established by András Hess in Buda, in 1472, its first publication being a Hungarian chronicle in Latin. The quick introduction of printing is evidence of the widening of the reading public. The development of education did not produce universities, despite the efforts of Sigismund, Matthias and János Vitéz, yet many students, both nobles and commoners, studied at the universities of Vienna, Cracow and Prague and at Italian universities. Bibliophilism, emerging from the monasteries, had spread among the top layers of the ruling class and occasionally even among the well-to-do townspeople and the nobility. The largest libraries were in the possession of the humanist clergy holding high political positions, but more outstanding than any was the famous collection of Matthias, the Corvina library, numbering more than five hundred sumptuously produced books containing the treasures of classical and humanistic literature.

Renaissance art entered Hungary along with humanist culture. Its centre was the royal court, since Sigismund's reign permanently established in Buda. The Gothic palace of Sigismund was expanded by Matthias in the Renaissance style, and embellished with the sculptures and frescoes of Italian masters and with products of the royal faience workshop. Exquisite summer palaces were built at Visegrád, Tata and Komárom. The king's builders and decorative artists catered to the humanist members of the Hungarian ruling class, and Renaissance art penetrated into many parts of the country. Hungary became the most important centre of humanism and Renaissance art beyond the Alps, spreading its influence throughout Central Europe.

# HUNGARY IN THE 15th CENTURY

0 50 100 km

P = The territory of towns in the Szepes region  
pledged to Poland

- 1 ARANYOSSZÉK
- 2 BESZTERCE
- 3 BODROG
- 4 FELSŐ-FEHÉR
- 5 HEVES
- 6 KÁSZONSZÉK
- 7 KÜLSŐ-SZOLNOK
- 8 UGOCSA

B = Bonyha  
D = Dicsőszentmárton  
E = Esztergom  
K = Kolozs  
R = Rimaszombat  
T = Torjvasára



## 9. THE COLLAPSE OF ROYAL POWER (1490-1526)

### Victory of Feudal Reaction

Renaissance culture was still in full bloom when its socio-political foundations collapsed. The barons, newly raised by Matthias, were anxious, as was clearly stated by the new palatine, István Zápolyai, 'to rid themselves of harassment and oppression', which they felt they had suffered under Matthias notwithstanding the advantages they had enjoyed at the same time. There were claimants in plenty to the throne of the heir apparent János Corvinus: in addition to Queen Beatrice, there was the Habsburg Emperor Maximilian I, Wladislaw, King of Bohemia, and another Jagiello, John Albert, a Polish prince. The decision was in the hands of Palatine Zápolyai, who enjoyed the support of the nobility, and was himself in favour of the weakest pretender, Wladislaw. János Corvinus was isolated and had to be content with the provinces in the south and the title of 'King of Bosnia'. He died young, in victorious warfare against the Turks in 1504. The diet proclaimed Wladislaw II (1490-1516) as King of Hungary, but severely restricted his power: he was prevented from levying extra taxes, or acting without the consent of the royal council. Wladislaw promised to marry Queen Beatrice, but the ceremony as performed by Bishop Bakócz, the king's secretary, was deliberately fraudulent, in order to obtain the subsequent annulment of the marriage by the Pope. Queen Beatrice, deceived and defrauded of her property, eventually returned to Italy.

John Albert and Maximilian tried to enforce their claims by arms, but they were driven out of the country by Matthias's 'Black Army', which thereby performed its last feat. The barons, on the other hand, felt uneasy while such a formidable striking force existed in the king's hands, for it was likely to limit their influence and even render them superfluous. In order to end the war a treaty was signed, by which Wladislaw restored the Austrian provinces, recognized Maximilian's right to the title of king of Hungary, and agreed to his succession if he (Wladislaw) died without an heir. The Black Army, having rendered all the services required of it, had to be destroyed. It was sent against



the Turks without supplies and when the famished army began to plunder, Matthias's famous commander, Pál Kinizsi, a hero of the Turkish wars, was sent with his baronial army to annihilate them. After this most modern army of its time had been destroyed, the barons made the diet force the king to grant regular pay to the baronial armies. This arrangement meant a return to the age of Sigismund: once again, the baronial armies were to be maintained from public funds.

The administration, the second pillar of the royal power, did not meet the fate of the royal army, for its leaders—owing to a mistake which Matthias was unable to avoid—were barons, archbishops and bishops. Tamás Bakócz was appointed chancellor and then Archbishop of Esztergom. Instead of using the administration now under his control for the strengthening of royal power, he exploited it for his own ends, to compete with greater success for power with the barons. Royal revenues soon reverted to the barons, they were able to collect the taxes, so that the treasury became depleted even more than before Matthias's reign, with a yearly revenue under 200,000 florins. At the same time, Bakócz's own yearly income, with the aid of extortion and bribery, rose to 100,000 florins, and the Renaissance splendour of his palace in Esztergom outshone the royal court. Other church dignitaries and barons also succeeded in thriving at the expense of the royal estates and revenues. In their greed, they fought each other tooth and nail. Wladislaw looked on impassively at this waste and corruption. Being a man of lazy disposition and little talent, he did not even attempt to rid himself of the tutelage of the barons and prelates. Because he approved and nodded assent to all their wishes, he obtained the name in Hungarian 'Ladislav Dobzse' (Polish for 'all right'). The expenses of the royal household were paid from his revenues from Bohemia, but he was often compelled to obtain loans at exorbitant interest rates to cover even his kitchen expenses.

The abasement of royal power was not primarily due to Wladislaw's personal qualities, but much more to a system which enabled the most powerful baronial family to isolate the king from the nobility. The leaders of the centralized administration could not rely on the nobility against the barons, and were thus compelled to form a baronial opposition. Out of this *cul-de-sac* of power concentration, a two-party system developed under the reign of the Jagiellons: the court party, comprising church dignitaries in state employment and those barons who supported the power of the king for the sake of personal advancement, and the nobles' party, led by the Zápolyais with the support of other barons.

The political scene was dominated by the struggle between the Court and the nobility, fought at the diets held on the Field of Rákös in the outskirts of Pest, with the intrigues of barons and prelates of both parties in the background, involving many temporary alliances and feuds. To resist the demands of the Zápolyais for the throne, expressed in an ever more undisguised manner and with the support of the nobility, Wladislaw's government was obliged to turn for aid to the Habsburgs, having no adequate resources at home.

After the death of István Zápolyai, his elder son János, Voivode of Transylvania, became the leader of the nobles' party. His cause was advanced by an unscrupulous lawyer, István Werbőczy, a former clerk in Matthias's chancery and then spokesman of the nobility in the diet. In his speeches, Werbőczy often appealed to the traditional anti-German sentiment of the nobility. At the first diet of 1505, a well-armed demonstration of the nobility demanded the resignation of Wladislaw and the appointment of Zápolyai as king of Hungary. The court party, on the other hand, appealed to the Emperor Maximilian I, who threatened Zápolyai with war and forced him to retreat. The second diet of the same year, however, declared that should Wladislaw die without an heir, a 'national' king would be elected to rule over Hungary. In 1506, a male heir was born to Wladislaw, so that—for the time being—Zápolyai's hopes remained unfulfilled.

### Economic Decline and Social Tension

The decay of royal power and the subsequent anarchy delivered Hungary to the Habsburgs, who in the meantime had added to their possessions the Low Countries, the Kingdom of Spain and the American colonies. Wladislaw II and the court party were entirely dependent on the Habsburgs, which enabled the Fuggers to acquire Hungarian mining interests. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, South German capitalists began to show a lively interest in the Central European metal mines. It was they who granted the necessary loans to the Austrian iron industry, but later on they found the more profitable mining of copper, lead, mercury, silver and gold more attractive. Among them the Fuggers were the most prominent. They established business connections with the Habsburgs through their silver mining activities in the Tyrol, and became their chief creditors. It was owing to the Habsburgs that the Fuggers first came to Hungary where they became partners of the Thurzós in 1494, establishing several foundries. Because lead was used for the smelting of copper ore in



order to extract silver, they bought up the Austrian lead mines one after another, and in 1502 took over the gold mines of Silesia. The mines in Wladislaw's kingdom contributed to the wealth of the Fuggers, and indirectly promoted Habsburg expansion through the unlimited credit granted to them. The alliance of the greatest political and financial powers of the age decided the fate of Hungary and Bohemia, and it was merely a question of time when the two crowns would pass from the Jagiellos to the Habsburgs.

Towns in Hungary, in these circumstances, continued to decline rapidly. It no more occurred to Wladislaw to rely on the towns against the barons than it did to protect them. In his financial straits he granted royal towns to the barons; the burghers themselves were obliged to redeem their freedom. The city of Esztergom was unable to do so and degenerated into a borough of the archbishop. The towns, trying to extricate themselves from their predicament bought peasant-villages, and tried as collective landlords to find their way into the feudal ruling class. The more the towns produced for themselves, the smaller the market for Hungarian agricultural commodities became, so that the peasants earned less and less. At the same time, the landlords increased their pressure for bigger payments. The peasants who tried to improve their lot by escaping were forcibly brought back, and the nobility contemplated stopping their free movement altogether.

The great landowners were not opposed to the free movement of the peasants, because they could always direct it towards their own estates. The nobility, on the other hand, suffered by losing both the peasants who moved into the towns and those who were forcibly carried off by the unscrupulous big landlords. Finally, the efforts to restrict the free movement of the peasants proved stronger.

The boroughs enjoyed a relatively favourable form of taxation, payment in a lump sum, but the introduction of the ninth made their situation worse. Deterioration in the life of the peasantry was responsible for the uprising of 1514, the greatest peasant war in Hungarian history, which involved peasants throughout the whole country.

### The Great Peasant War and the Mohács Disaster

Archbishop Bakócz, who headed the court party, tried to avert the danger of both internal unrest and continued Turkish raids by announcing, with the consent of the Pope, a crusade against the Turks in 1514. Hosts of peasants joyfully moved into camp near Pest. The

leadership was entrusted by the archbishop to György Székely (Dózsa), who had won a reputation for valour in the skirmishes with the Turks on the Hungarian border. The urban poor, artisans, students, village priests and impecunious noblemen joined forces with the peasantry. The barons, distrustful from the beginning of the idea of the crusade and scared of the armed peasant masses, persuaded the archbishop to stop further recruitments. Henceforth the landlords forcibly prevented their tenants from taking up arms and the dependents of those who had already joined the army were maltreated.

The news of the suspension of the crusade and the hostile behaviour of the landlords exasperated the peasants. Some leaders of the people in the camp considered that the opportunity was ripe to improve the lot of the peasantry by restricting the privileges of landlords. Dózsa identified himself with the peasantry, and decided to lead his army against the lords who were trying to stop the crusade. From Pest he went to the boroughs of the Great Plain and declared war against the oppressors of the people. At the same time, he sent his lieutenants to diverse parts of the country where the peasants were assembled, in order to organize and conduct them to the main force.

The peasant army crossed the Tisza and occupied one by one the fortified castles beyond the river in the southern part of the country. István Báthory, a member of the court party and *ispán* of Temes, was entrusted by the barons with their defence, but he was forced by the triumphant peasant army to retire into the fortified castle of Temesvár. Dózsa had Temesvár under siege when relief for the castle arrived in the form of the army of Zápolyai. Because disaster was threatening the whole ruling class, Zápolyai had come to terms with Báthory, his former enemy. Dózsa attacked Zápolyai, but his chances were small against the well-equipped, more experienced cavalry of the nobility and he was defeated after courageous fighting.

The smaller peasant armies were wiped out, and ruthless retaliation followed. Dózsa was made to sit on a red-hot iron throne, with a red-hot iron crown on his head, and burnt alive. The peasants were murdered and banded by the thousand. The diet passed an *ex post facto* law sanctioning the death sentences of the leaders, and decided that the peasants were to be perpetually and universally bound to the land and deprived of their right to own land. István Werbőczy completed his work on Hungarian common law in the same year; the 'Tripartitum opus iuris consuetudinarii incliti regni Hungariae' codified the equality of barons and nobles and listed their rights (*una eademque nobilitas*). It became not only a universally accepted law-book, but also the bible of the nobility, because Werbőczy added

to his book the retributive laws made against the peasantry. The Hungary of the coming centuries based its legal system on the joint conception of freedom for the nobility and servitude for the peasantry.

During the reign of Louis II Jagiello (1516–1526), conditions inside and outside the country further deteriorated. According to a double marriage and succession settlement made in 1515, Ferdinand Habsburg, Archduke of Austria, was to marry Wladislaw's daughter, Anne, and King Louis, Ferdinand's sister, Mary. This agreement made final Hungary's ties with the Habsburg dynasty on the eve of the struggle between Habsburgs and Turks for the hegemony of the Mediterranean and Central Europe. In 1519, Charles of Habsburg was elected Holy Roman Emperor, with the help of the Fugger money and the vote of Louis II as King of Bohemia, but owing to his obligations in the West and anarchic conditions within the German Empire, Charles could not engage a large force for the defence of Hungary. Nándorfehérvár (Belgrade) fell in 1521, but the ruling class, bound up in their party struggles, did not worry about the defence of the country. Louis II had no other choice but to hand over the fortified castles of Croatia to Ferdinand of Habsburg, who garrisoned them with his own mercenaries. The court party, bearded since the death of Bakócz by the Palatine István Báthory, sent one embassy after another to the German imperial diet asking for help, but all in vain. In the meantime, Báthory, accused of embezzling money collected for defence against the Turks, had been relieved as palatine by Zápolyai, and the nobility had intervened in favour of Werbőczy's election. The court brought the copper mines under treasury management, but only deprived itself of credit from the Fuggers. The lack of funds also created critical conditions in the mines and was responsible for the rising of the miners in Besztercebánya. Werbőczy proved a worthy partner of the peasant scourge Zápolyai in his suppression of the miners in the spring of 1526. This coincided with the decision of Sultan Suleiman II, to launch his grand attack against Hungary. The small, badly organized Hungarian army was annihilated by the Turkish artillery and the assault of the janissaries on 29 August 1526 at Mohács.

*Chapter III*

## FROM THE BATTLE OF MOHÁCS TO 1711

## 1. THE DIVISION OF HUNGARY INTO THREE PARTS (1526-1571)

Until the sixteenth century, the social structures of the various European countries, even if they differed in level of development, still showed the same general tendencies. The increasing break-up of a self-sufficient economy, a gradual change-over to simple and later capitalist commodity production, together with attempts at centralization in the political sphere, were general tendencies everywhere. During the sixteenth century, however, considerable changes took place and Europe became divided into two regions, one where trade and another where agriculture was preponderant. The dividing line between the two regions, once it settled down after the initial period of changes, ran along the Elbe and the eastern foothills of the Alps.

The fate of the Central European states, among them Hungary, also depended on the economic and political changes which began in the sixteenth century. Those historic forces which had contributed to the slow emergence of the Danube monarchy of the Habsburgs, the Prussian state and the Russian empire, eroded the economic and social foundations of the independence of the Hungarian, Bohemian and Polish states. Hungary was first to meet disaster.

### Two Kings

There were other reasons than military why the battle of Mohács was more than a defeat; it was, in fact, one of the greatest disasters in Hungarian history. The military defeat brought into operation certain factors which might have emerged much later, and possibly only one by one. The first of these factors was the growing Turkish menace. Between Hunyadi's victory at Nándorfehérvár and the fall of the same fortress seven decades later, fighting had continued around the southern border of the country, but the Turks could not break through the Save-Danube defensive line. During the reign of Selim (1512-1520), the Turks had turned their backs on Europe, and given their attention to

the occupation of Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Arabia. To offset this respite, the military bases acquired in the Middle East multiplied the strength of the Turks. The accession of Suleiman II brought a change in policy; the Turks turned again towards Europe, and owing to the turmoil in Hungary it was impossible to prepare effective defences against them. The twofold structure of the Turkish army, a massive core of *spahis* (cavalry) and *janissaries* (infantrymen) and an undisciplined auxiliary army depending upon its overwhelming weight of numbers, would have required a similar army to counter it. An army of this type had been organized by Hunyadi at Nándorfehérvár, consisting of mercenaries and crusaders. With the crushing of the 'Black Army' and Dózsa's crusaders, the Hungarian ruling class had deprived itself both of mercenaries and of a massive force of armed peasants such as the peasant crusaders had been. The baronial and county battalions did not make up for either at Mohács. Nevertheless, the country had not yet been crushed. The sultan marched into Buda, but soon removed his forces from the country, fearing a counter-attack, for there was a Hungarian army intact under Zápolyai, which was late to join the battle of Mohács.

The country's defence, on the other hand, could not be properly organized, because of the political situation. Louis II died on the battlefield of Mohács. As he was the last of the Hungarian-Bohemian branch of the Jagiello dynasty, the decree of 1505, excluding the election of a foreign ruler, came into force, side by side with the Habsburg-Jagiello mutual succession agreement. It provided an open field not only for the most powerful Hungarian baron with the bulk of the nobility behind him, that is to say, János Zápolyai, but also for the Habsburgs, who were striving to establish supremacy over the European, and more specifically, Central European states. If the Hungarian ruling class had established a united front in favour of either of them, it would have made possible joint action against the Turks. Both parties, however, looked upon the succession as a unique chance for the consolidation of their power.

As soon as the sultan retired from the devastated country, János Zápolyai (1526-1540) was crowned king by his adherents. The court party, under the leadership of the Palatine István Báthory, and the dowager Habsburg Queen Mary, summoned a counter-diet, which elected the Habsburg Ferdinand I (1526-1564), the younger brother of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. Zápolyai asked for the support of the king of France, a deadly enemy of the Habsburgs, but he received no substantial aid. Ferdinand, with money obtained from the Fugers, organized an army and expelled Zápolyai from the country.

Abandoned by his adherents, Zápolyai fled to his brother-in-law, the king of Poland. The latter did not want to get involved against the Habsburgs, but the cause of Zápolyai was fervently supported by a Polish aristocrat, Hieronymus Laski. He and the French ambassador jointly advised Zápolyai to put himself under the protection of the sultan. Suleiman II accepted Laski's proposal, and in 1529 he personally launched an attack against Vienna. He did not succeed in occupying the seat of the Habsburgs, but Zápolyai was able to return under the auspices of the Turkish army, and the frightened country took him back. Ferdinand's party dwindled and he could keep control only over the western counties.

The magic circle had closed. The Hungarian barons had to realize that they were no longer free agents in their struggles, but had become the tools of two great powers, both wishing to keep Hungary for important strategic reasons. Charles V aimed at European supremacy, in the centre of his endeavours was the possession of Italy and the ending of the German wars of religion. The Turks, on the other hand, wished to obtain supremacy in the Mediterranean and extend their power in the Danube region. The two powers clashed in the Mediterranean; the outcome seemed doubtful until the victory of the Habsburg fleet at Lepanto in 1571. As the king of France, the ancient enemy of the Habsburgs, was also interested in the Mediterranean, the Danube region, in spite of its importance, remained secondary. The Habsburgs could not concentrate their forces there for a decisive battle and had to satisfy themselves with defensive action in the military zone of Vienna and with maintaining their hold on the western part of Hungary. A Turkish attack launched against Hungary in 1532 exhausted itself after the siege of a few castles. Until 1683, in spite of several attempts, the Turks failed to advance as far as Vienna. This was not entirely due to the effectiveness of the castle defence system, but also to the simple fact that the supply lines of the Turkish army did not reach beyond the western frontier of Hungary.

Constant attempts by two foreign powers to conquer Hungary made the country the scene of continuous battles. Turkish armies and Habsburg mercenaries, while clashing with each other, devastated the country and plundered the inhabitants. There would not have been peace even without the foreign soldiers. Within the confines of the two parts held by the two kings, their adherents continued their incessant private warfare. They plundered the estates of supporters of the opposite side, and levied taxes, tithes and all other contributions possible on the peasants to cover their own war expenditures. They frequently changed over from one side to the other, according to the opportunities



sions of the Zápolyais, worth any small kingdom, and compensation to Isabella. The first step was for Ferdinand to send an army strong enough to fend off Turkish intervention. This had to wait for some time, because the army sent in 1542 to recapture Buda failed and Ferdinand had neither money nor inclination for a new venture. It was Suleiman, on the contrary, who was able to attack: he captured a great number of Hungarian castles and fortifications in the following year, thus extending the Turkish domain in Hungary.

It was only in the spring of 1551 that the long-expected detachment of Ferdinand's army set foot in Transylvania. Queen Isabella was persuaded by Martinuzzi to resign the crown in her son's name, and accept estates in Silesia. But the army of 7,000 hired soldiers sent under General Castaldo was—according to the sarcastic remark of a contemporary—'too large for an embassy, too small for warfare'. Martinuzzi started negotiations with the Turks to gain time till the arrival of newly promised help from Ferdinand. The help never came, and Castaldo, believing rumours and stories about Martinuzzi's treachery and his intimacy with the Turks, became afraid of a trap and brought about the murder of the 'friar'.

This act hastened Turkish revenge. In 1552, two Turkish armies were sent against the Hungarian border fortresses, which, in fact, were hastily fortified medieval castles, monasteries and the like. The Habsburg army and the troops of the Hungarian nobility risked only a single open battle against them; after this ended in defeat, no further attempt was made to help the besieged castles, which had to surrender to the Turk one by one. The Pasha of Buda met resistance only at the castle of Drégely, whose heroic defenders under György Szondy, instead of surrendering, fought on in the smouldering ruins to the last man. The Grand Vizier attacked from the south and surrounded Temesvár, the key to the east of the country. Its commander, István Losonczi, pleaded for help, but Castaldo remained unmoved. At the request of his despairing soldiers Losonczi applied for and was granted a safe-conduct, but after his surrender the Turks ruthlessly massacred the whole garrison. The Grand Vizier continued on his way to take the most important fortress guarding the crossing of the Tisza, the castle of Szolnok. After taking it, he joined forces with the Pasha of Buda and together they proceeded to besiege Eger. With the fall of Eger the north-eastern part of Hungary would have come under Turkish rule. Its small garrison, under István Dobó, held out heroically for thirty-eight days against continual Turkish assaults. Autumn weather at last compelled the enemy to withdraw. The plan of uniting Hungary under Habsburg rule remained impossible for a long time.

### Political System of the East Hungarian Kingdom

On the orders of the Turks the Transylvanian diet of 1556 recalled Queen Isabella and John Sigismund. The East Hungarian Kingdom of the Zápolyai dynasty was restored, but its size was drastically reduced. The Tisza region as far as Szolnok, occupied by the Turks in 1552, was not returned to John Sigismund. Beyond Transylvania, his rule extended only to the region of the Tisza north of Transylvania, and even there how long he could remain in power depended on the attitude of the local oligarchy. In Martinuzzi's life-time, the centre of the East Hungarian Kingdom was outside Transylvania, in the Tisza region, though Queen Isabella held her court in Transylvania, at Gyulafehérvár. After 1552, however, the southern part of the Tisza region was in Turkish hands, and the northern part up to Tokaj belonged to the Habsburgs; consequently Transylvania became the mainstay of the Zápolyai kingdom. This greatly influenced the future of the state and its political structure, because the social development and ethnic composition of the two parts, i.e. Transylvania and the Tisza region, were entirely different.

The Tisza region was a country of big feudal estates. The great majority of the villages belonged to the Bishop of Várad and a few aristocratic families, and the nobility were in their service. No free town had developed in this extensive region. This was the most pronouncedly agrarian part of Hungary. On the other hand, there were numerous boroughs, considerable agricultural production, cattle-breeding centres giving more freedom to the peasants than was enjoyed by the villages. This economic and social structure had transformed the Tisza region into the classic land of feudal anarchy. Had the centre of gravity of the East Hungarian Kingdom remained there, central power could not have extricated itself from the bondage of the leading local barons.

The social conditions of Transylvania were entirely different. This province had attained a less advanced form of feudal development than Hungary. The territories of the Sekels and the Saxons with the mixed Rumanian-Hungarian counties, ruled by the nobility, had formed autonomous administrative districts. The mixed Hungarian-Saxon county towns, of which the most important was Kolozsvár, had their own local autonomy. The Sekel dignitaries, the Saxon patricians and the members of the nobility, the so-called 'three nations', were often divided by differences, but as members of the ruling class, had interests in common in relation to the oppressed classes. In Transylvanian society the voivode, appointed by the king of Hungary, assumed



the highest judicial and military power. He also balanced the political differences of the three 'nations', playing them off against each other if necessary. In his official capacity he was given enormous estates, compared to which everybody else seemed poor, even the Bishop of Transylvania, although he was very rich indeed. About the middle of the sixteenth century only four Hungarian aristocratic families, the Bánffys, the Kendis, the Bethlens and the Apafis, owned more than fifty villages each, and these were divided between many members of each family. In Hungary they would hardly have counted as members of the baronage, rather as well-to-do nobility.

After the return of Isabella and John Sigismund, the office of the voivode and the bishoprics of Transylvania and Várad remained vacant, their enormous estates being managed by the treasury. The king disposed of their incomes and of the church tithes. The king thus became the largest landowner, which furnished him with the basis of central power. The diet consisting of the representatives of the three 'nations' and the nobility of the Tisza region obediently endorsed any royal wish. The organized opposition of the nobility, so typical in Habsburg Hungary, was hardly known in the eastern kingdom (the later Transylvanian principality), and only court intrigues were recorded in its history.

Queen Isabella obtained privileges, greater than any Hungarian monarch since Matthias, and greater than those of any western ruler, including the Habsburgs. The queen used her absolute power in the name of her son: she appointed her officials, mainly foreigners, without consulting the diet and she entered into negotiations with foreign powers as she pleased. She had no preconceived political conceptions, but her instinct for power coincided with certain tendencies in historical development, resulting from the social conditions of the East Hungarian Kingdom, and unwittingly she became the pioneer of centralized government.

### **The New Principality of Transylvania**

After the death of Queen Isabella, in 1559, the affairs of the Transylvanian court were run in the name of the helpless John Sigismund by István Báthory. The most powerful aristocrat of the Tisza region, Báthory was holder of the highest military office, the governorship of Várad. His great political ambition was to preserve the vestiges of Hungarian independence ('our survival', as he said) by strengthening the East Hungarian Kingdom, under Turkish protection. He hoped to

win lasting peace by checking the expansion of both Habsburg and Turkish power. To this end he persuaded John Sigismund to make his peace with the Habsburgs and reconcile himself to the temporary partition of Hungary. Ferdinand I himself was not averse to the idea of a settlement and invited Báthory to negotiations in Vienna. The lengthy discussions were interrupted by the death of Ferdinand in 1564, then in 1566 by the renewed attack of Suleiman II against Hungary, which proved to be his last, and was rendered memorable by the siege of Szigetvár. The castle had been reduced to a smouldering ruin when its captain, Miklós Zrínyi, at the head of his Hungarian and Croatian soldiers, broke out and engaged the besiegers in single combat to the last man. Owing to the long delay caused by the siege and the sudden death of the sultan, the Turkish army withdrew from Szigetvár. The new sultan, Selim II, did not continue his father's policy of conquest. The explosive force of the Turkish Empire had exhausted itself; the Turkish political system proved unable to consolidate the economic and social life of the conquered countries, and through their ruthless exploitation the sultan undermined his own power. The Turkish decline only became apparent in another hundred years' time, but its beginning became manifest with the Treaty of Adrianople, signed by Selim II and the Habsburg Emperor Maximilian II as King of Hungary (1564–1576) in 1568, which sanctioned the partition of the country for a long time to come.

Báthory's policy was triumphant. According to the agreement of Speyer made in 1570, John Sigismund resigned his title of King of Hungary, contenting himself with the title of 'Prince of Transylvania and Sovereign of Parts (Partium) of Hungary'. Outside Transylvania, i.e. in the Tisza region, he could only hold territories in fief from the Habsburg king, but, owing to the Turkish control of Transylvania, this restriction had no meaning at all. The new political structure, the Principality of Transylvania, could actually fill the role allotted to it by Báthory. After the death of John Sigismund in 1571, Báthory as the newly elected prince of Transylvania, tried to establish his power.

### **Political System of the West Hungarian Kingdom**

The western and north-western part of the country, for a longer time under Habsburg rule, became part of the Habsburg Empire as the 'Kingdom of Hungary', an integral section of the great monarchy, as planned by Charles V and his brother Ferdinand. The latter had tried to comply with the task allotted to him in the world-wide dynastic

design of the Habsburgs: the pacification of the internal anarchy within the German Empire and the checking of the Turkish menace in the Danube region. To this end, he tried to unite countries with entirely different historical traditions and ethnic compositions, like the Austrian provinces, Bohemia and Hungary, into a Burgundian type of administrative system. In 1527, he established his central administration, to which, in principle, the administration of each country and province was subject, but, in practice, the opposition of the nobility prevented an actually united, central government. The court council never became the leading administrative power uniting the Habsburg countries, as planned by Ferdinand I, because the appointed Hungarian and Bohemian members were reluctant to participate. In 1537, the Hungarian and Bohemian section ceased to function, and in 1556, the Austrian provinces also withdrew, and the council became an exclusively German body. Instead of central government, independent governing bodies functioned in each country. After 1531, Ferdinand I succeeded in preventing the appointment of the leading Hungarian official, the representative of the nobility, the palatine. Instead a church dignitary was appointed as president of the Hungarian council. The Hungarian governing council was reorganized after 1542 as a collegiate body. Its members, on the other hand, were recruited from the feudal aristocracy, who were not uncritical instruments of the wishes of the ruler, and, in judicial matters, were nearer to the diet. In these circumstances, the Hungarian governing council failed to act as a bridge between the monarch and the administrative bodies, which still enjoyed wide autonomy. The county officials appointed from the nobility were able to conduct affairs with almost complete disregard of the central government.

The right of most Western central governments to interfere directly in the life of the peasants, though they were under the rule of the landlords, did not really exist in the Habsburg Empire. New taxes could only be levied on the peasantry with the consent of the nobility. The chief weapon of the nobility against centralization had always been the right to vote taxes. Jurisdiction over the peasantry had, also by feudal right, been in the hands of the landlords. The failure to establish centralization in administrative and judicial matters contributed to the decay of the court chancery, an intermediate organ between the monarch and the executive official bodies. The court chancery remained the organ for expediting business only in the Austrian provinces; Hungary and Bohemia were given chanceries of their own.

In financial and military matters, however, Ferdinand I succeeded in

subjecting the fiscal chambers in the different countries to the central organs. The *Hofkammer* developed into a supreme authority exercising direction and supervision over the Austrian, Hungarian and Czech treasuries. Although it had jurisdiction only over the management of crown lands and the regular royal revenues, with the public revenues voted by the nobility coming under it only in exceptional cases, administration through the fiscal chamber proved to be the most lasting result of Habsburg centralization. The realization, through the establishment in 1556 of the War Council, a centralized supreme military administration, was of similar importance. Ferdinand only succeeded in forming one central organ that drew together all the threads of political life. This was the Privy Council, the personal advisory body of the monarch. In the composition and operation of this body the nobility had no voice whatsoever, although admittedly it did not function as an authority at all, as its decisions reached the administrative officials as the personal directives of the ruler. Its members included aristocrats and prelates from the German Empire, Austria and—less frequently—Bohemia, and also lawyers from the German Empire. Since the Habsburg emperor had very little actual power in the German Empire, in reality the Privy Council ruled countries that were hardly represented in it, if at all. Its activities were regarded as alien rule, not only by the completely disregarded Hungarian nobility, but by the Austrian and Czech nobility as well.

The Habsburg system in the sixteenth century was characterized by a contradictory position with regard to central government, for the monarch was granted a free hand in foreign affairs and military matters, but in administrative and judicial matters full autonomy was granted to the nobility. The policy of Charles V and Ferdinand I was not based on the mercantilist protection of their subjects for participation in world trade, as was that of the absolute rulers of France and England, but sought to obtain credits from South German and Italian merchant bankers, mainly Genoese, who were not even under their rule. They could not have done otherwise, as the bourgeoisie in their own countries had not advanced far enough in capitalist development (except in the Low Countries, the first to dissociate itself from the Habsburg patrimony) to furnish sufficient credit for the many-sided needs of Habsburg policy. Foreign credits freed the Habsburgs from the control of the nobility, but in return they were obliged to pledge their mines and a considerable portion of the royal revenues to foreign merchants, and accord them many privileges in domestic and foreign commerce, which could not but be detrimental to the internal

development of trade and industry; what was more, the extension of the policy of centralization was hindered, thus paving the way for its crisis.

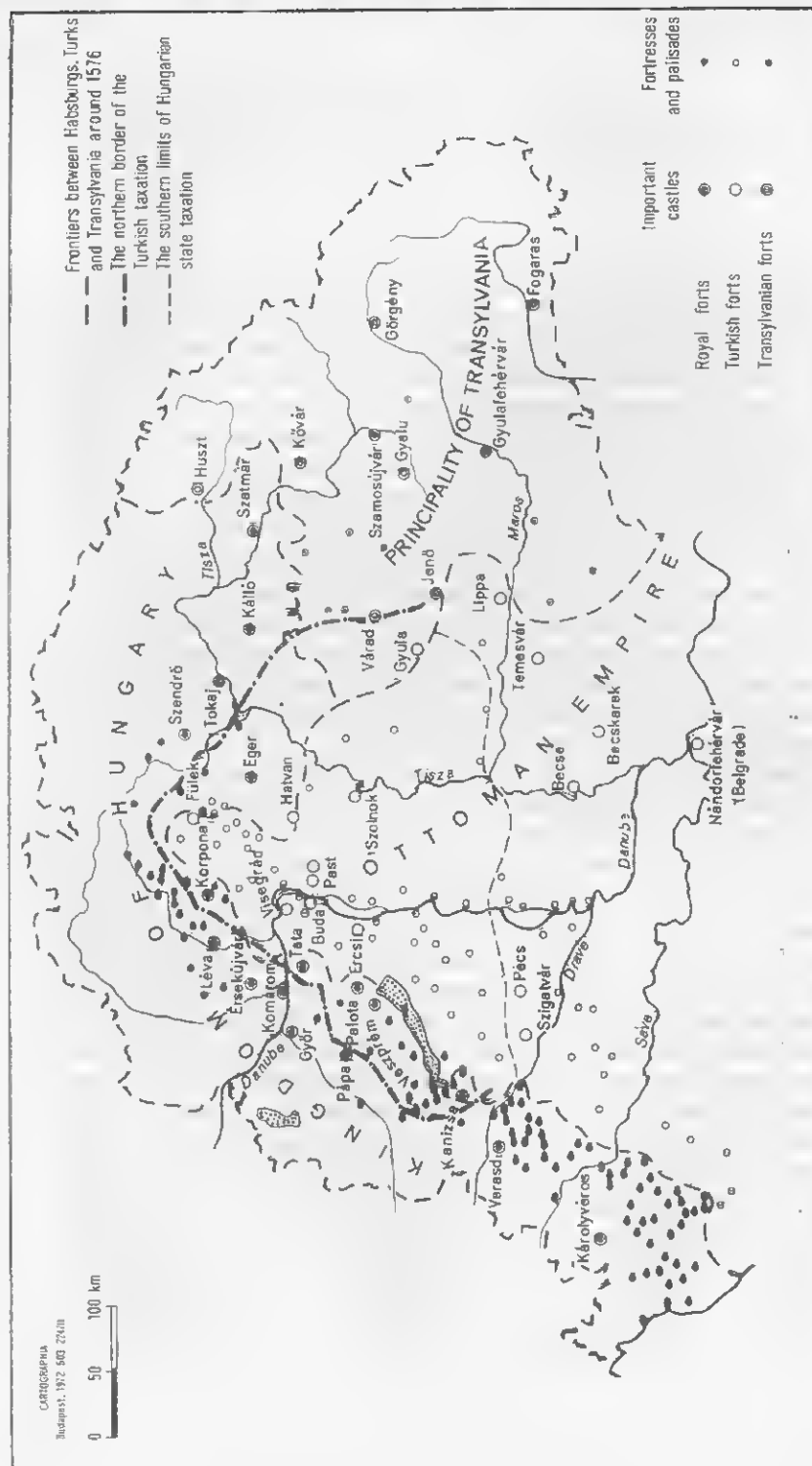
#### The Establishment of Effective Defences against the Turks

The royal income of Ferdinand of Habsburg, according to the estimates of Venetian ambassadors, amounted to three million florins, the Austrian provinces contributing one and a half million, the countries of the Bohemian crown one million and Hungary half a million. It would have been a considerable sum had half of it not been spent as advance payments on royal debts. On the death of Ferdinand I his debts amounted to seven and a half million florins. This had risen to ten millions by 1573. The annual cost of defence against the Turks amounted to an average of 900,000 florins, the remainder being hardly enough for the royal household and central administration. Any expense beyond the maintenance of the military and political status quo only added to the state debt, creating a growing drain on revenues. The German Empire of which Ferdinand was first king then emperor, contributed only special grants until 1556, after which regular financial aid was given. Owing to administrative difficulties in collecting the money, however, not more than half of the aid became available, about 100,000 florins around the middle of the century, and, later, 200,000–300,000 florins. Imperial policy cost the Austrian Habsburgs much more: the election expenses to the German throne alone amounted to 350,000 florins, most of it spent as bribes to the German electors. Ferdinand was obliged to borrow from the Fuggers, and incurred new debts amounting to one million florins.

In these circumstances, notwithstanding the results of Ferdinand's policy of centralization, the fact that the revenues coming from Habsburg Hungary were greater than those from the whole country in Jagiello times, and the number of new fortifications built in the frontier district, central power never properly established itself. Local administration in Hungary as well as military defence was mainly in the hands of feudal self-government. The royal chamber officials also employed the local county administration to collect the extra war-tax (*dica*, a constant and increasing burden in the life of the peasantry) and the tithes, which were farmed out from the Church to the State. The final control of royal revenues was thus given over to the nobility, and because of the privilege obtained in the Jagiello period by the big landowners to keep an army of hired soldiers, they were able to ap-

propriate illicit sums of money. Behind the line of fortified castles controlled by the central power, there existed a series of private castles in the hands of the landlords, the garrison of which were paid partly from state money and partly from the landlords' private income. The private feudal armies contributed considerably to the defence of the country, but even more so to the power of the aristocracy among whom only the Perényis, Losonczi and Báthorys represented the baronial families from the period before Mohács. The others (the Nádasdy, Zrínyi, Batthyány, Dobó, Forgách, Pálffy and Rákóczi families) were descended from military and civil office-holders, and from other elements of the nobility and townsmen who had become rich during the sixteenth century. The land-owning aristocracy filled the highest posts in the political administration and, also, claimed vacancies in the command of royal castles, judging themselves offended if the Habsburgs appointed foreign mercenaries to command the castles. The nobility, which had lost its land during the Turkish occupation, looked for new opportunities to advance themselves by military service, but they had not yet extricated themselves directly or indirectly from the influence of the big landlords. Private feudal armies flourished in the sixteenth century, and with the influence of the nobility dwindling in the diet, the counties became the tools of the aristocratic *főispáns* (lord lieutenants).

The actual political system of the Kingdom of Hungary was a balance between the central power, relying on foreign funds, and feudal autonomy. Thus the central power and the feudal ruling class were able to collaborate and ward off the Turkish menace. The line of border castles was strengthened, reaching from the Adriatic through Croatia, along the northern shore of Lake Balaton, up to the Danube bend and to the foot of the Carpathians and the Upper Tisza, and remained so in the sixteenth century. The new defensive tactics of the castle garrison, with their constant harassing assaults, forced the Turks to build their own fortifications along the frontiers. The expansion of the Turks was halted, and they could no longer reckon with any territorial gain. No more could be achieved by the joint efforts of the Habsburgs and the Hungarian ruling class. The compromise, therefore, of the Habsburg dynasty with the Hungarian ruling class began to weaken towards the end of the sixteenth century, as a result of the development of economic and social forces.



Defence system and taxation limits in the 16th century

## 2. INTERRUPTION IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (16th Century)

The discoveries and colonizations of the Western countries considerably increased their existing advantage in economic development over the Eastern European countries. Contrary to the general belief that Eastern Europe was isolated from world markets by changes in the routes of international trade, Austrian, Bohemian and Hungarian copper, mercury and iron and Silesian and Bohemian linen reached Asia and the American colonies from the ports of Venice and Antwerp. The real reason for the economic and social backwardness of the countries of Eastern Europe was precisely their foreign trade, their dependence on the capitalist economy of the West. Owing to this relationship, the economic and social development of the Eastern European countries stood still, and even deteriorated, compared with the West. The long-forgotten, brutal methods of feudal oppression and exploitation were renewed in the system of the so-called 'second serfdom' which was connected with the renewal of the self-managed demesne of the landlord to the detriment of the peasant's tenure.

In Hungary, owing to the Turkish occupation, the general Eastern European trends produced the most unfavourable economic and social structure.

### The Decay of Town Markets

Large, important Hungarian towns, including Buda, Pest, Székesfehérvár, Esztergom and Szeged, became military settlements under Turkish rule, with modest local domestic industries. Nor could the towns of the Habsburg kingdom and of the Transylvanian Principality keep up the level of development achieved in the previous century. Citizens who had escaped from Buda and Pest increased by 4,000–5,000 the number of the inhabitants of Pozsony and Nagyszombat, but most towns about the middle of the sixteenth century had an average population of 2,000–3,000. Not only were handicrafts stagnating in the Hun-

garian towns, but their trading importance also diminished during the sixteenth century.

The structure of Hungarian foreign trade changed very little. In the middle of the sixteenth century 90 per cent of imports were manufactured commodities, while 99 per cent of exports to the West were agricultural produce and metal ores. Whatever change had occurred had not been favourable. About 80 per cent of all exports were made up of cattle, the rest being copper, inconsiderable compared to previous figures. The copper mines of Besztercebánya, so flourishing at the beginning of the century, were given up by the Fuggers in 1547, because of uncertain conditions inside the country, and the more competitive price of Swedish and Japanese copper on the world markets. The importance of precious metals (gold and silver) had also diminished. About the middle of the century, the yearly production was only 500 kilogrammes of gold and 6,000 kilogrammes of silver in the whole of Hungary. The latter comprised 20 per cent of the total silver production of Central Europe, which was extremely little compared with the 200,000 kilogrammes a year produced in America, increasing by the end of the century to one and a half million kilogrammes.

The majority of manufactured goods which constituted the bulk of imports came from the West. As their price rose less than that of agricultural products, the price revolution enabled Hungarian exporters of cattle and wine to buy more foreign commodities. Cloth was imported mainly from Germany, Moravia and Silesia, and partly from England, especially kersey, the typical cloth used for soldiers' uniforms. With Turkish fashions gaining more ground, the import of eastern silks, linens and leather goods also increased. Metal goods, weapons, knives and scythes were imported mainly from Nuremberg and Styria. With rising standards of comfort and style inside the home since the Renaissance, it was not only the barons, but also the nobility and the well-to-do bourgeoisie who wanted to own a German bed and an Italian armchair in place of the bench used previously. They also wanted English, Italian, German or Turkish utensils made of lead, copper, glass and pottery, instead of wooden plates and mugs; German, Polish or Italian tapestries, Turkish rugs for the walls and floors of their rooms, Viennese locks and padlocks to secure their coins and jewellery.

The conservative guild system of handicrafts in the Hungarian towns could not successfully compete with the products of foreign workshops. In the second half of the sixteenth century, as a result of the price revolution in Europe, the prices of raw materials rose,

compelling Hungarian artisans to raise their prices. The nobility insisted on their reduction and the county administration was entrusted with the task of forcing the towns to comply with their instructions. The result could only be a further decline in handicrafts, aggravated by a new development: the landlords began to employ artisans on their estates to produce the most important commodities. The peasantry did not need the superior products of the town guilds, and bought the cheaper goods of the unskilled artisans of the county boroughs.

Owing to the decline of their trade, the attraction of the markets of the royal towns diminished while the markets in the boroughs became busier, because the agricultural produce of the large estates and of the peasantry were also on sale there. By this time the royal towns had lost their former role in handling cattle exports. This was the only profitable business which fell into the hands of the well-to-do peasants and the lesser nobility. They either sold their own cattle, resold bought cattle, or else acted as agents for the big landlords.

Because of the price revolution and the decline in trade and handicrafts, a shortage of food appeared in the royal towns. The first reaction was the thorough utilization of every bit of common land within the town boundaries for cultivation. Later the town purchased villages farmed by tenants and, like any other landlord, obtained cheap food from the tenants' dues. Vineyards were especially favoured, but if the area bought was not suitable for wine, individual citizens, or the town itself, bought land in the Tokaj region, and produced their own wine there.

### Increasing Labour Services

With the loss of an outlet to the royal towns, the landlords and the peasants competed, even if with unequal prospects, in the agricultural markets of Hungary. Though the town market was declining, peasant production continued to rise throughout the sixteenth century, due to the increase of foreign trade. From the surviving records of the landlords and from the records of church tithes, it appears that a wealthy section of the peasantry was in the ascendant, producing far more grain, wine and cattle than its own needs.

In the war-torn parts of the country, the means of agricultural production had no chance to develop. Within the areas of the numerous destroyed villages of the Great Plain, former arable land was used for extensive cattle breeding. The peasants living inside the boroughs rented the fields of deserted villages for the breeding of thousands of



oxen to be exported to Western countries. Debrecen, under the leadership of the rich cattle-merchants, developed handicrafts, and the number of its inhabitants and the rate of its trade surpassed any royal town. In other parts of the country, agriculture developed further: about the middle of the sixteenth century viticulture in the Tokaj region was reorganized with the invention of the methods to produce the sweet *aszú* wine, which gave new impetus to wine export to Poland. In certain wine-producing regions all other forms of cultivation were stopped by the end of the sixteenth century, and vine-growing occupied every inch of ground.

The flourishing of the cattle-breeding and wine-trading boroughs was interrupted, however, when the landlords began to market their own produce. Figures are available on the commercial activities of the landlords in the fifteenth century and even before, although they did not produce commodities themselves, but sold those of their tenants. The demesne declined in the thirteenth century and existed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in only a few places. In the fifteenth century, it had still not been uncommon for landlords to buy their household necessities in the markets of the boroughs; but by the early sixteenth century, many landlords already produced their own wheat, wine and cattle on their newly expanded demesnes, called *major* (manor), sending the surplus to the market for sale. It is obvious that by then the landlord no longer bought the products of the peasants and as the town market continued to shrink there was little for the peasant to sell and even less to buy. He had little money to pay tradesmen and merchants and even less for the landlord. About 1530 it was common custom, throughout the country, to enforce the labour services of the peasants on the manorial fields side by side with hired labour. By the middle of the century, one baronial manor after the other reduced hired labour by expecting more from the tenants than the weekly one-day labour service fixed by law, making it compulsory for two days, or even three days a week, on every third week, or even every other week. But this custom was soon transgressed by landlords and their officials who demanded unlimited labour services whenever it pleased them. The raising of labour services was accompanied by peasant revolts throughout the country in the 1570s.

Labour service limited the peasants' own commodity production, although the price revolution enabled them for the time being to compete on the foreign markets. But the change in the agrarian system brought about other changes, too. About the middle of the sixteenth century, villages and boroughs were obliged to sell the landlord's wine regularly, or else during a certain period of the year visit regularly the

inn under the landlord's management. With this arrangement wine, the most profitable commodity on the Hungarian agricultural market, became monopolized by the landlords, a tremendous blow to the peasantry, who were thus deprived of the best source of their income as wine producers—the retail sale of wine. Even later, at the time of the heyday of the manorial system, the landlord's wine monopoly was his best source of income, contributing from a half to two-thirds of the total income of the estate. The landlords obtained wine for their inns and for the ever-increasing foreign market in Poland and Silesia from the traditional ninth and by forcing the peasants to sell. These forced sales became common in other commodities too, and they were sanctioned by the diet about the middle of the century. Buying at a low price and selling some at the highest price to the peasantry, while exporting the remainder, created a comfortable market for the Hungarian ruling class in exchange for the ever-shrinking market of the towns.

#### The Turkish Occupation and Its Effects on Economic and Social Conditions

In both the Habsburg kingdom and in the Principality of Transylvania the manor system based on labour services began to flourish, with the difference that in Transylvania the Sekel and Saxon peasants could not be compelled either by their own dignitaries or by the Hungarian nobility to perform forced labour services. In the parts under Turkish occupation, however, special conditions prevailed.

The landlords and the majority of the town bourgeoisie fled from the Turks, and the remaining village and town population became ordinary tax-payers of the sultan. The villages were given in fief to the spahis and the rest of the country—the bulk of the boroughs—paid their taxes direct to the Turkish treasury. The Turkish occupiers administered both villages and towns themselves, hiring out the collection of taxes to men appointed from their own ranks and placing jurisdiction in the hands of the *kadis* (judges). The level of dues did not differ from what it had been under the Hungarian lords, except for an additional poll tax on all non-Moslems, and some other special Turkish taxes. The spahis, like others who rented estates from the sultan, tried to exploit the peasants as much as possible, not knowing how long they would be allowed to stay. On the other hand, they only collected taxes and dues in kind, without expecting manorial labour services from the peasants.



During the sixteenth century, the Hungarian state and the landlords also tried to levy taxes on the peasantry under Turkish rule, a custom reciprocated by the Turks in the villages on the Turkish-Hungarian border. In the Treaty of Adrianople (1568), and in succeeding treaties as well, the arrangement known as Hungarian-Turkish condominium was formally sanctioned, meaning the sharing of taxes collected by both parties from the peasantry. The king of Hungary and the sultan mutually agreed to cede half of their tax revenues to each other, permitting the Hungarian landlords who fled beyond the border to levy taxes in their villages under Turkish rule. This right was enforced from time to time by deeds of arms by the garrisons of the border fortresses.

The border militia, who had a special reputation for bravery, rendered service in the castles of the king and the harons, and gradually rose to form a warrior élite. They assumed the special tactics of 'offensive defence', meaning the constant harassment of the enemy. They were obliged to do so by force of necessity, as neither king nor landlords could offer a regular pay, and their living had to come from the spoils of their raids in Turkish territories. In peacetime these raids continued incessantly, with Hungarian and Turkish warriors challenging each other to 'friendly' encounters during the lull.

In Western Europe this was the time of the creation of national states and national churches. In Hungary, owing to economic and social circumstances, and to the influence of the ideals of the Renaissance and the Reformation, the military fighting spirit fostered national consciousness: the idea that the Hungarian nation had the mission of defending the whole of Christianity against the pagan Turks.

#### Late Renaissance and Reformation

Humanist and Renaissance literature and art flourished in the country after Mohács, moving out of the royal court and the closed society of the high church dignitaries into the ranks of the nobility and townsmen. About the middle of the century, most of the writers were still churchmen, like the two outstanding writers of Renaissance memoirs, Miklós Oláh and Antal Verancsics, Archbishops of Esztergom. Under the influence of Erasmus the cult of the national language began, taking the form of Hungarian translations of the Bible which were cultivated by the lesser clergy. The first church reformers also came from the ranks of Hungarian followers of Erasmus. The Reformation in Hungary took root in the court of Louis II and in the Erasmian circle

of Queen Mary, and, after Mohács, though both Ferdinand I and King John Zápolyai were devout Roman Catholics, it spread uninterrupted. At first it was the ideas of Luther which spread, but by the fifties the teachings of the Swiss reformers prevailed in Hungary. Even the ideas of the anti-Trinitarian Servetus, hunted at Geneva, had supporters, who in Hungary combined them with Anabaptist ideas. The anti-Trinitarian movement was headed by Ferenc Dávid of Kolozsvár; he propagated mystic teachings about the coming of the 'thousand-year empire' and the ruin of the 'infidel', along with ideas attacking the dogma of the Trinity. In 1570, the year prophesied by him, the suffering peasantry of the Tisza region, oppressed by both landlords and Turks, rose under György Karácsony, aiming first to drive out the Turks and then to turn against the landlords. Their first venture against the Turks, however, proved unsuccessful, and the Hungarian feudal lords combined forces to suppress the rising. After this event, the anti-feudal Protestant sects could only continue in small communities, such as the Sabbatarians in Transylvania, who survived to the end of the nineteenth century.

The nobility, except for a small minority, welcomed the Reformation. They had opportunities to receive church property, while managing to check the revolutionary trend of the Reformation; and they forged from its democratic ideas weapons for restricting royal power. In the beginning, the preachers, mainly of peasant and urban origin, tried to raise their voices in support of the just grievances of peasantry and townspeople; they openly criticized the lords for oppressing their tenants and neglecting the defence of their country, but in the course of time, as their livelihood became threatened, they compromised and became themselves the defenders of the feudal system. The landlords managed to sponsor not only the Lutheran and Calvinist Churches, but also the anti-Trinitarian (later the Unitarian) Church as well. In the German towns and the Hungarian and Slovak parts of the north-western region Lutheranism won, whereas Calvinism spread mainly in parts of the country under Turkish occupation and in the Transylvanian Principality. Anti-Trinitarianism spread in the same regions as Calvinism, but on a smaller scale. The Reformation had taken a heavy toll on the Roman Catholic Church, which was reduced temporarily to a small minority of the population.

The Reformation influenced favourably the development of the Hungarian language, as the reformers preached in the vernacular. Of the numerous Bible translations, that of Gáspár Károli, which was printed in 1590, was most popular, and influenced the development of the literary medium to as great an extent as Luther's Bible translation

in Germany. Many schools and printing presses came into existence. The famous Calvinist schools of Debrecen, Sárospatak and Marosvásárhely, and the anti-Trinitarian school of Kolozsvár became colleges as early as the sixteenth century.

In Transylvania religious toleration—unique in this epoch—existed until 1570: the three offshoots of the Reformation, Lutheranism, Calvinism and Anti-Trinitarianism, were declared established religions along with Roman Catholicism, but the Orthodox religion of the Rumanian peasantry was only tolerated. In this atmosphere, the more extreme proponents of the Reformation, expelled from their own countries, were given shelter, men like Blandrata, Sozzini, Paleolog and Sommer. István Báthory restricted anti-Trinitarianism by permitting the Jesuits to settle and by the introduction of the Counter-Reformation, but he could not limit the other Protestant religions. The only change in Transylvania in matters of religion was that, with the restriction of the anti-Trinitarians, Calvinism prevailed.

Literature also became a means for the reformers to propagate their ideas. The poems of András Szkárosi Horvát, the plays of Mihály Sztárai and the tales of Gáspár Heltai admonished both the Roman Church and the feudal lords for oppressing the people. After the suppression of radical trends within the Reformation, not only the subject-matter, but also the style of literature changed. Instead of religious controversy, the temporarily silent ideas of the secular Renaissance were reintroduced. In the court of the Báthorys, humanist historians, like Ferenc Forgách and István Szamosközy, were heartily welcomed.

Patriotic ideas mingled with those of humanism and the Reformation in the poetry of Bálint Balassi. His patriotic and religious poems and his love lyrics achieved high standards of perfection in Hungarian literature.

In architecture, it was only after Mohács that the Renaissance style finally prevailed over the Gothic. The Reformation did not inspire new church buildings, but the Turkish occupation encouraged the building of castles. The best buildings of the sixteenth century are fortresses built by Italian architects (the most advanced being those of Győr, Komárom and Érsekújvár in Hungary, and Várad, Szamosújvár and Fogaras in Transylvania), residential castles built by Italian and Hungarian masters and fortified manor houses. The most typical was the quadrangle castle with four turrets, one in each corner—many of these survive in every part of the country (Sárvár, Nagybiccse etc.).

### 3. THE CRISIS OF HABSBURG POWER (1571–1606)

In the last third of the sixteenth century the power of the Austrian Habsburgs was seriously threatened. The background to the crisis was the strengthening of the feudal ruling class, which both crushed the peasantry and obstructed the life of the towns. But the compromise between the ruler and the nobility was upset only when the resources of the dynasty underwent setbacks caused by the failures of the South German merchants and the constant blows levelled at Spanish power in the Low Countries and on the English coast.

From the seventies onwards, all over the Habsburg countries, the nobility attempted to restrict central government, and their efforts, especially in the Hungarian diets, became more and more forceful. In 1576, the royal governor, speaking in the name of the Estates, called upon King Maximilian to relieve the country 'from the slavery and tyranny introduced under his rule and formerly unknown in these parts', meaning the absolutist provisions of central government. It was well-known in Vienna that many barons and nobles in the Hungarian kingdom adhered to the Transylvanian prince, expecting from him the reunion of Hungary and the end of Habsburg rule.

#### Centralization in Transylvania

István Báthory (1571–1586) had brought about such consolidation in Transylvania that it was quite natural for the Hungarian ruling class, dissatisfied with Habsburg rule, to turn to him. He was the vassal of the Turks and paid taxes to the sultan but he could prevent Turkish interference in the life of the country and could act independently in foreign affairs, and it was he, not Maximilian, who secured for himself the vacant crown of the Polish Jagiellos in 1575. He appointed his brother Kristóf as voivode of Transylvania, but managed the affairs of Transylvania himself through the Hungarian chancery at Cracow. The fact that the prince of Transylvania was at the same time king of

Poland meant that the fate of the country was involved with the Polish-Russian-Swedish struggle for supremacy in the Baltic. Báthory and his Polish adherents fostered the idea of an Eastern European empire stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. The plan was hardly realistic at a time when anarchy in Poland prevented the supply of either material or military forces for a sustained campaign.

In Transylvania Báthory very shrewdly played against each other the conflicting interests of the three 'nations'—the Hungarian nobility, the Sekels and the Saxons—and, in the meantime, created a new social basis for his power in the rising social class of the free military peasantry. Such a class had been formed earlier by the Sekels, but their unity was disrupted by the endeavours of their leaders to make them their serfs. The common people, hit also by Martinuzzi's new taxes, rose up in defence of their liberties. The rising failed in 1562, and afterwards the mass of the Sekels became the Prince's serfs, but the Sekel leaders were granted equal rights with the Hungarian nobles and the landlords' rights over their Sekel servants. Báthory, in order to make up for his loss of soldiers, raised to the rank of nobility individuals and groups of Hungarian, Rumanian and Sekel peasants, obliging them to perform paid military service in his Russian campaign.

His officials managing the affairs of Transylvania were men of humanistic culture, educated at the University of Padua, who obediently executed Báthory's orders to extort money contributions and soldiers from the reluctant Transylvanian nobility for his wars fought in pursuit of apparent Polish interests. His distant hopes of reuniting Hungary with Polish help were frustrated, however, by his premature death, when Transylvania came under the rule of his mediocre nephew, Zsigmond Báthory (1586–1598).

#### **A New Court Aristocracy and the Fifteen Years War**

The internal crisis in the Habsburg Empire had in the meantime become more acute. During the reign of Rudolf (1576–1608), the struggle between the Austrian, Bohemian and Hungarian nobility, who were mainly Protestants, and the Catholic dynasty, became a religious issue. The number of aristocrats who had become rich from commodity production had grown, and in return for loans supplied by them to the dynasty during the last quarter of the sixteenth century, they took into their possession most of the treasury estates. The Austrian landed aristocracy moved into key positions in the central financial administration, sharing the rent of state revenues with the office-holding

bureaucracy and with Austrian merchant capitalists released from the South German pressure. A growing number of the landed aristocracy abandoned the camp of the opposition and took up their position in the service of the central power. This aristocracy cannot be identified with the court aristocracy of absolute monarchies in Western Europe, because they were active partners in economic life and capitalist ventures; they could rather be compared to the commercialized nobility of England. This society, however, was backward in capitalist development, and the feudal ruling class had not assumed bourgeois virtues; on the contrary, it was the bourgeoisie that became feudalized. The basis of power and wealth remained the feudal estate, and the rising bourgeoisie also wished to become feudal landowners.

At the end of the sixteenth century, the forces wishing to support centralization were still in a state of formation. The leaders were themselves hesitating about whether to join the opposition or the central power, but favourable conditions during the fifteen years of the Turkish wars helped to show the way towards the final decision.

Tension within, and renewed attack from the Turks, forced the Habsburg court in 1591 to agree with the Hungarian nobility and start the war. But the Habsburgs had so many debts that they were unable to incur new financial and military obligations, so there was no proper army to fight against the Turks, only the private armies of the Hungarian aristocracy and the castle garrisons. The war was carried on by temporarily hired foreign soldiers under mercenary leaders, dismissed and reorganized from year to year according to the amount of money available from papal and German donations. But the Turkish force was also weak and the Habsburgs could boast of some initial successes.

The cooperation of Transylvania and the two Rumanian principalities was very helpful. The adviser of Zsigmond Báthory, István Bocskai, could see no other way out for the country, now deprived of its Polish backing, than alliance with the Habsburgs. He hoped to have a voice in Hungarian affairs should the war against the Turks be successful. In 1595, Bocskai and Michael, voivode of Wallachia, won a decisive victory over the Turks at Giurgiu, and most of the escaping Turks perished in the Danube. The Transylvanian army captured the Turkish castles along the Maros river. But the allies lost a battle at Mezökeresztes in 1596 when the sultan personally led his army. The war dragged on for another decade, with the border fortresses changing hands several times, but neither party could get the upper hand. In between their battles, both the unpaid soldiers of the Habsburgs and the Turkish marauders plundered practically the whole country.

Zsigmond Báthory, wanting to extricate himself from this unlucky war, ceded Transylvania to King Rudolf of Habsburg. The Transylvanian ruling class, however, fearing Turkish retaliation, desired peace with the sultan. After fierce civil war, Basta, the mercenary leader of the Habsburgs, held the country in terror for years.

The ruling class of Habsburg Hungary became embittered because of the miseries of the ever-prolonged Turkish war, their inferior role to the foreign mercenaries in conducting the affairs of the war and, last but not least, because they were not able to benefit from any boom brought about by the war itself. The Hungarian commodity-producing landlords tried to get contracts with the army or offer loans against treasury security, but always found the Austrian landlords, the office-holding bureaucracy or their allies, the rich bourgeoisie, blocking their way.

The most typical representative of the new Austrian capitalists, Lazarus Henckel, the son of a chamber official in Hungary, started as an agent of a firm in Ulm, and went over into business on his own. During the Fifteen Years War he supplied cloth for the Habsburg army, monopolized most of the cattle trade in Hungary, and advanced loans to the court on the strength of future financial aid to come from Germany. By about 1604, the Habsburg court owed him approximately one million florins. To cover it, he was promised a share in the copper business in Besztercebánya, and the confiscated estates of a Hungarian magnate, István Illésházy.

Illésházy himself, a one-time nobleman, had worked his way into the Hungarian aristocracy through engagement in commercial enterprises and became a firm opponent of the large-scale interests of Austrian merchant capital in Hungary. He was charged with treason, not only as a means of forcing the withdrawal of an inopportune individual, but as the first step in a general attack against the Hungarian aristocracy. The confiscation of their estates was an attempt to break the resistance of the strongest opposition to Habsburg absolutism and, also, to replenish the empty treasury of the ruler. The Austrian aristocrats and bourgeois capitalists around the monarch hoped by this means to obtain estates in Hungary and the right to own commercial monopolies there. The Hungarian high court acquitted Illésházy, but the Habsburg court falsely condemned him to death and ordered the confiscation of his estates, so that Illésházy was obliged to flee abroad. While the Habsburgs were engaged in preparing new charges against the Hungarian landlords, General Belgiojoso occupied the Protestant churches in the towns and confiscated the goods of resisting burghers.

### The Bocskai Rising

Resistance in Hungary found a worthy leader in the person of István Bocskai who, disappointed with Habsburg policy, had retired to his estates near Váradi. He was persuaded by the pro-Turkish, young leader of the Transylvanian exiles, Gábor Bethlen, to organize an uprising against the Habsburg rule with Turkish help. Belgiojoso found out about the rising and in the autumn of 1604 advanced with his army against Bocskai. Beyond the few hundred garrison guards of his castles, Bocskai had no armed forces at his disposal, as his negotiations with the Turks had only been in the initial stage. In this situation he asked for the help of the marauding soldiers of the Tisza region, and also succeeded in winning over the Hungarian mercenaries of Belgiojoso's army.

These soldiers, called heyducks (*hajdú*) were peasants who had escaped in great numbers from the Turkish devastation and the landlords' oppression and had taken up military service for hire, or else plundered the country for a livelihood. In the wars against the Turks they distinguished themselves for toughness, but in want of a standing mercenary army, only some of them could become regular soldiers. The Hungarian diet had several times ordered that they should be reinstated as peasants, or failing this, wiped out. Bocskai with his enlisted heyducks repulsed Belgiojoso's attack and occupied Debrecen, Kassa and, after some misadventures, finally expelled Basta's army, which was sent against him, from the country. The majority of the ruling class were forced by the peasantry in unison with the heyducks to join forces with Bocskai. The nobility of Transylvania elected him prince and the sultan offered him the crown of Hungary.

At the height of Bocskai's power, social unrest became apparent. The Transylvanian nobility wished to restore the kingdom of Hungary under Turkish protection, but the landlords of Habsburg Hungary, headed by Illésházy, wished for agreement with the Habsburgs, in exchange for religious toleration and autonomy. Both parties agreed on one point: that the disarming of the heyducks and the peasantry in their train was a matter of first importance, or the rising might easily rid itself of the control of the feudal lords, and break out into a real peasant war. In this situation there was nothing left for Bocskai but to attempt to open negotiations.

After long delays and discussions, a compromise was reached in 1606, and signed as the Treaty of Vienna. It recognized the independence of the Principality of Transylvania, accorded religious toleration in the towns and frontier castles in the part of the kingdom returned

to Habsburg rule, and stipulated that the government should be in the hands of appointed members of the Hungarian aristocracy and nobility. A solution to the heyduck question was suggested by Bocskai: he gave them a similar status to the free Sekel peasants doing military service. Ten thousand heyducks were offered land and exemption from feudal burdens in return for free military service. With Bocskai's mediation the Treaty of Zsitvatorok was signed in the same year by the Turks and Habsburgs; it ceded Eger and Kanizsa to the Turks, who had previously occupied them, and secured peace for the country.

### **The System of 'Perpetual Serfdom' and the Subjection of the Towns to the Nobility**

The settling of the heyducks marked a breach in the system of oppression of the peasantry by the landlord. On the other hand, all the achievements of the Bocskai rising had only strengthened the position of the ruling class against the endeavours of the central power and the struggles of the peasantry. The diet's Act of 1608 recognized the final judicial power of the landlord over the peasantry, and the county was to be the only administrative body with power to decide the movement of the peasants. In these important matters, therefore, the intervention of the central power had been excluded.

The absolute power of the landlord was intended to secure labour services. In order to achieve it, in the seventeenth century the Hungarian ruling class established a system which enabled them to bind the peasantry by force and judicial trickery. The term used by contemporaries, the so-called 'perpetual serfdom', is a Hungarian version of the Eastern European 'second serfdom'. Refusal of labour services and escapes had been considered formerly as an injury to the landlord demanding compensation. Seventeenth-century legal practice distorted this principle by regarding a refusal to comply with the landlord as seditious and to be dealt with according to the landlord's will, involving even the death sentence. The only way open to the serf to escape the death sentence was to commit himself to 'perpetual serfdom', i.e. renounce the right to move freely and sign a declaration of obedience. Any attempt to refuse to comply was severely punished, and in the course of time the social status of the whole peasantry came to be regarded as 'perpetually serf'. Early medieval serfdom was thus restored in a new form.

The production of the manor was based on the unpaid labour services of the serf, whom it was customary to regard as tied to the land

in the sixteenth century and whose lack of freedom to move was definitely established by the seventeenth century. In Hungary there were slight differences from general Eastern European custom. Wheat in Hungary was a negligible item in foreign trade, being mainly bought up on the home market to meet the needs of the armies fighting in the country and in the frontier castles. Hungarian cattle, on the other hand, were exported in considerable numbers to supply Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, Silcsia, the South German towns and Venice; Hungarian wine was equally in demand in Poland and Silesia. Labour services could never be exploited to such advantage in cattle raising and viticulture as they were in wheat production. The manors produced more wheat than anything else; their cattle breeding and vineyards were insignificant. About the middle of the seventeenth century, as the management of manors had traditions a hundred years old to draw on, more than half of the wheat production on most estates came from the manor, whereas the peasants produced seven to eight times more wine than the landlord's vineyards. Similarly, the animal stock of the landlord was only in exceptional cases larger than that of a well-to-do peasant.

The peasants' own production in Hungary suffered severe setbacks, but it did not dwindle to the same extent as in other countries with similar developments, where wheat was the dominating agricultural product. A more serious blow was exerted on agricultural commodity production by the general European economic depression of the seventeenth century, which diminished the buying power of both landlords and peasants.

The system of 'perpetual serfdom' added new difficulties to the development of the towns. Indirectly it retarded progress in the towns by preventing the movement of the peasants into them, and by contributing to the backwardness of their markets. In addition, the landlord's trading and manufacturing activities crippled those of the bourgeoisie. More directly, the nobility inflicted several blows on the towns. Any nobleman moving into the towns was exempt from paying taxes, being outside municipal jurisdiction and regulations. The bourgeoisie lost its monopolistic position in its own markets, and the county authorities even stopped their price-regulating functions by imposing their own towards the end of the sixteenth century. Thus about the middle of the seventeenth century towns in Hungary came under the control of the nobility, noblemen being elected to the councils, with decisive votes. The townspeople themselves engaged in agricultural activities; the main income of some towns came from the villages which owed labour service, and from the sale of wine. Only those towns were re-



cognized as free which owned villages with serfs, i.e. acted as a collective landlord.

However heavy the feudal burden on the peasantry and towns, the ruling class was nevertheless not successful in making the system of perpetual serfdom universal. The resistance of the peasants, as manifest in the number of escapes and uprisings, led to a freer economic and social development. Movement into the boroughs did not stop; although their privileges were considerably restricted by the landlords, even so they offered better conditions than the villages. By then many serfs had obtained noble status from either the Habsburgs or the princes of Transylvania in return for their military services. The number of noblemen holding a peasant tenure with feudal obligation, but otherwise free, rose to thousands in the seventeenth century. And the number of heyducks, exempt from feudal obligations in return for military service and receiving portions of free land, rose throughout the country.

The landlords also needed administrative and peace-keeping officials, who were mainly recruited from the poor nobility and heyducks, regarded as the reserves of the ruling class. With the peasant burghers of the boroughs, they constituted the free—at least, comparatively free—sector of peasant production exempt from the burdens of perpetual serfdom. Their privileged position served as an example to the great masses of the oppressed peasantry.

#### 4. TRANSYLVANIA VERSUS HABSBURG (1606–1648)

##### **Transylvania, the Stronghold of Resistance**

Bocskai died in 1606. His last will defined the mission of the Principality of Transylvania by instructing the prince to interfere in Hungarian affairs whenever the privileges of the Estates were being threatened by the Habsburg king of Hungary. The Treaty of Vienna, which had been signed by Bocskai as prince of Transylvania, seemed to provide scope for this activity, because it codified the privileges of the nobility. The treaty, however, was made against the wishes of Emperor Rudolf by his brother, Archduke Matthias, and the emperor did not show any willingness to sanction it.

The freedom of the heyducks, promised by Bocskai, depended on the implementation of this document. In 1607, their captains called them to arms, proclaiming their wish to have a Calvinist Hungarian ruler instead of the 'faithless, foreign papist', King Rudolf.

The Hungarian ruling class had no intention of breaking away from the Habsburgs but the raising of the heyducks was a good opportunity to ask for the resignation of Rudolf in favour of his brother Matthias II (1608–1619) who was willing to sanction the Treaty of Vienna. The Estates of Austria, Bohemia and Moravia soon joined the Hungarians in a federation to ensure the mutual recognition of their privileges. Some of the heyducks, satisfied with the Treaty of Vienna, happily settled down in their boroughs beyond the Tisza allotted to them by Bocskai. The majority, however, entered into the service of Gábor, the last descendant of the Báthory family, to win for him the Principality of Transylvania.

Cardinal Khlesl, Matthias II's minister, tried to defend the key positions of the central power against the Estates. He could not depend, however, on agreements made with the Hungarian nobility as long as they had hopes of support from Transylvania. Khlesl, in order to achieve his ends, organized a conspiracy to get rid of Gábor Báthory; then, having failed, he sent an army in 1611 to conquer Transylvania. The army of the pro-Habsburg Hungarian aristocracy suffered a heavy defeat. Báthory, however, owing to a quarrel with the



heyducks, was assassinated in 1613. The court of Vienna prepared for another attack against his successor, Gábor Bethlen, but the council of the Hungarian, Austrian, Bohemian and Moravian Estates held at Linz ordered its postponement.

Khlesl, nevertheless, succeeded with his new tactics of trying to divide the ruling classes in the Habsburg countries. He tried to recruit new members into the loyal court aristocracy by gifts, offices and the propaganda measures of the Counter-Reformation. In Hungary the new policy was successfully supported by Péter Pázmány, a former Jesuit who became Archbishop of Esztergom and Primate. A distinguished writer, he won over to the Roman Church a great number of aristocratic families. Owing to the institution of perpetual serfdom, which encompassed the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*, this brought about the reconversion to Catholicism of the peasants dependent on the landlords.

With the rising number of converted aristocrats leaving the camp of resistance, the struggle of the remaining Hungarian Protestants for religious freedom and the right of the nobility to self-government became more difficult. The movement was headed by the Protestant landed aristocracy, who expected support from the Calvinist princes of Transylvania.

#### The Confederation of the Estates in the Habsburg Countries and Their Alliance with Transylvania

Transylvania emerged from the ravages of the Fifteen Years War during the rule of Gábor Bethlen (1613–1629). The trend of Bethlen's policy followed that of István Báthory and Bocskai who had tried to organize a standing army of the free peasantry, independent of the Estates. Bethlen proceeded consciously on these lines. He gave nobility to peasants, defended the liberty returned to the Sekels by Bocskai and established new heyduck settlements in Transylvania. At the same time, he did not permit the aristocracy to acquire large new estates and ordered the return of the treasury estates which had passed into their hands in the troublesome years of the past decades.

Bethlen was not content with the resources provided by the possession of feudal estates. He instituted an economic policy far in advance of the backward Transylvanian conditions, even mercantilist in some of its features. He invited foreign craftsmen and miners to Transylvania, organized state trade based on monopolies and gave full support to the towns. He tried to make his court at Gyulafehérvár

a cultural centre, and established there the first Transylvanian university. In strong contrast to the policy of the loyal pro-Habsburg aristocracy, he supported the peasantry by increasing the number of free peasants and, within the system of perpetual serfdom, by trying to defend the serfs from the abuses of their landlords. He made it punishable by law to stop the children of the serfs from attending school. His pro-peasant policy naturally aimed at increasing their tax-paying capacity, nevertheless it won for him the sympathy of the peasantry in Habsburg Hungary suffering from the oppression of the landlords and from the violent Counter-Reformation.

The Habsburg court anxiously watched the new consolidation of Transylvania in the economic and political field. It did not risk a frontal attack, but a number of adventurers were sent to Transylvania as pretenders to Bethlen's throne. Bethlen easily dismissed these provocations. The outbreak of the Thirty Years War gave him an opportunity to make an open challenge.

All the international political differences emerging in the Thirty Years War produced the first all-European armed conflict. To the differences between the Austrian Habsburgs and the German princes was added the resistance of the Estates of Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Hungary against Habsburg absolutism. The Habsburg–Transylvanian controversy also produced a worsening in Habsburg–Turkish relations in due course. Western European hostility to the Spanish branch of the Habsburgs revived, creating an anti-Habsburg front from England to Transylvania.

There was an indirect relationship between the struggles of the Habsburgs and their direct enemies, and the contest between Sweden, Poland and Russia for the Baltic. As long as the Swedish–Polish alliance lasted, the affair could be isolated from the conflict of the Habsburgs and their enemies. During the reign of Sigismund III, however, the Swedish–Polish relationship loosened, and the Baltic question again became acute, permitting the rapprochement of Sweden and Russia. The Polish ruling class asked for the help of the Austrian Habsburgs against a possible alliance between Sweden and Russia, thus breaking with the policy pursued by Poland throughout the sixteenth century and provoking an attack by the Turks, until then neutral towards Poland.

In this very complex European situation, Bethlen first tried to profit from the conflict of the Austrian Habsburgs with the Protestant princes of Germany and the resisting Estates of their countries, in order to obtain the restoration of an independent kingdom of Hungary. He first intervened with an army to help the Bohemian insurgents. It served

as an encouragement to the Hungarian and Austrian Estates to renew their confederation in support of Bohemia. An army of Transylvanians, Bohemians, Moravians, Hungarians and Austrians reached Vienna in the autumn of 1619. The power of the Habsburgs in Central Europe was in danger. The Hungarian adherents of the new Habsburg king, Ferdinand II (1619–1637), combined with an army of Polish mercenaries to attack Bethlen's forces from the rear and the siege of Vienna was frustrated.

Habsburg centralization, however retarded, was still more successful in mobilizing its resources and gaining outside help than the weak confederation of the Estates, which was torn by internal differences. Bethlen's attempt to involve the Turks in the conflict did not prove helpful. Neither the federation of the German Protestant princes, nor the English father-in-law of Frederick, King of Bohemia, helped the Bohemians; on the other hand the League of the German Catholic princes was more active. The League's forces, combined with the Habsburg army, defeated the Bohemian insurgents in the battle of the White Mountain in 1620, before Bethlen's relief force could arrive.

Ferdinand II tried to break the Bohemian ruling class by executions, the confiscation of their estates, and the introduction of absolute government. The Austrian Estates also capitulated. Fifty years of economic and social development brought about the end of the Austrian and Bohemian feudal resistance, and political leadership slipped into the hands of the Catholic court aristocracy, who held the key positions in the absolute monarchy.

#### Gábor Bethlen and the Anti-Habsburg European Coalitions

Hungary escaped the fate of Bohemia, but the top stratum of the Hungarian ruling class was not invited to join the new aristocracy in the Habsburg court. It also turned out that the idea of the reunion of Hungary, fostered by Transylvania, was mere illusion. The centralized Transylvanian principality was strong enough to keep the idea of resistance alive in Hungary, but hardly strong enough to restore the centralized Hungarian kingdom of Matthias Hunyadi against the wishes of both Habsburgs and Turks. After the sultan had refused his consent to the union of Hungary and Transylvania under the same ruler, Bethlen too came to realize that the idea was impossible and, although elected king of Hungary in 1620, he refused to be crowned. In 1622, he signed with the Habsburgs the Treaty of Nikolsburg which recognized the Treaty of Vienna and the ceding of seven Hungarian

counties to Transylvania. Thus Bethlen's power came to extend over half of Hungary.

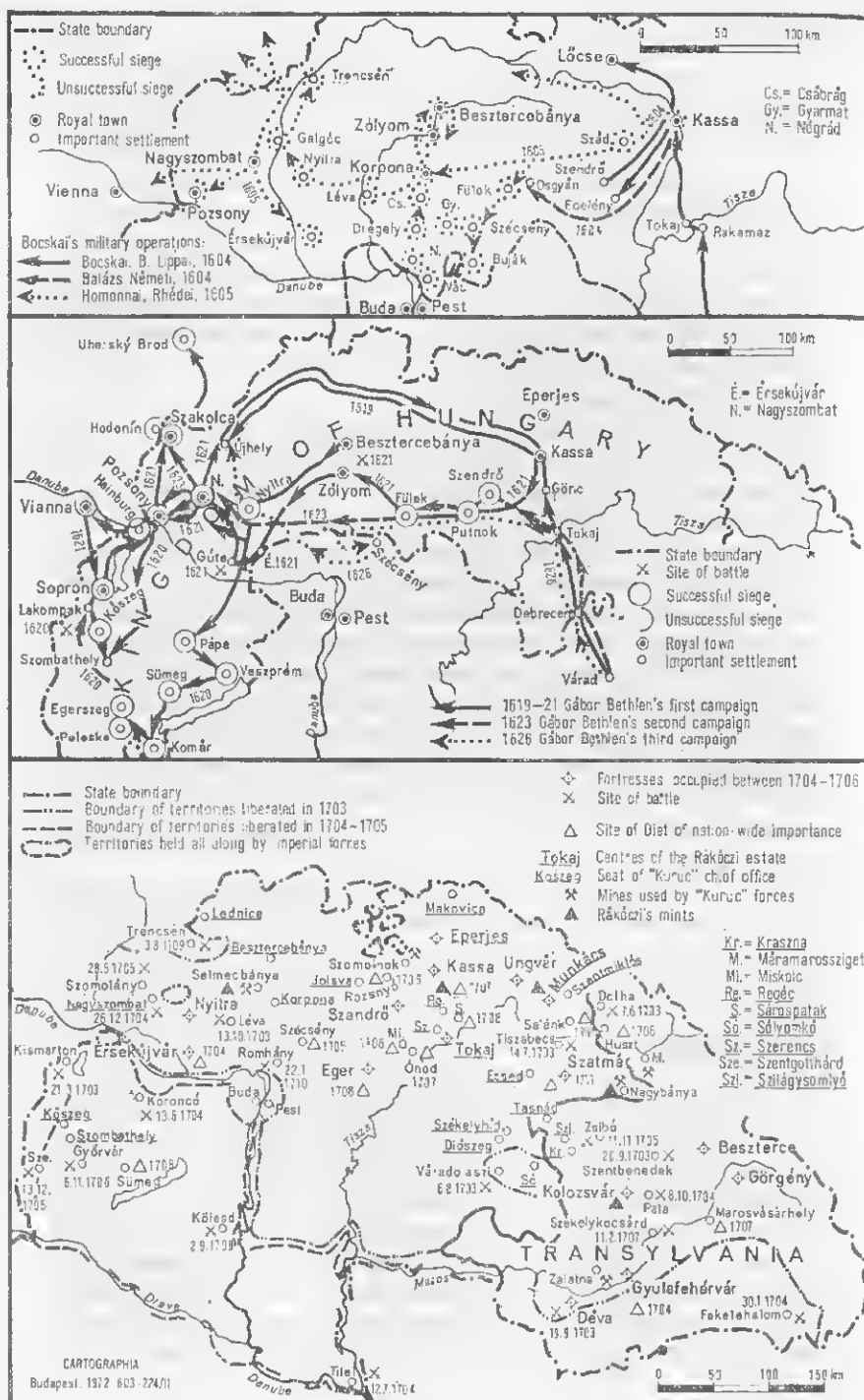
Bethlen, not being able to achieve more by himself, had great hopes in the Western European anti-Habsburg powers. He arranged far-reaching diplomatic connections to organize a grand anti-Habsburg coalition. In 1623, when his hopes began to be realized, he occupied Habsburg Hungary, and encircled the imperial army in Moravia. But aid from the West never arrived, and he deemed it best to renew the old treaty. He was even prepared to give up his anti-Habsburg activities if Ferdinand II would appoint him governor of Hungary. But Vienna would not hear of that.

Bethlen again attempted to reach an understanding with the Western powers. He joined the English, Dutch and Danish alliance. According to a common plan, the Danish were to attack in the West, and Bethlen in the East. In 1626, the allies sent the mercenary army of Mansfeld to Bethlen's aid. Wallenstein proceeded in person to Hungary to prevent Mansfeld's army from joining up with Bethlen, but he arrived too late. The armies of Wallenstein and those of Bethlen and Mansfeld were facing each other. Bethlen wanted to give time to Mansfeld's army to recover from fatigue, and assumed delaying tactics. Wallenstein, on the other hand, dared not follow him deep into the country, and preferred to withdraw, but owing to attacks in his rear by Bethlen's cavalry, the withdrawal turned into a disorderly flight. Habsburg Hungary fell for the third time into Bethlen's hands, but he was again compelled to make peace, because the Habsburgs were winning on the western front.

In the last years of his life, he made plans with Gustavus Adolphus to encircle the Habsburgs, but his death prevented him from witnessing the intervention of the Swedes.

#### Gábor Bethlen's Political Legacy

The widow and successor of Gábor Bethlen, Catherine of Brandenburg, was under the influence of a Habsburg coterie of aristocrats, and seemed willing to deliver Transylvania to the Habsburgs. It was again the heyducks who staked their lives for the independence of the principality. Their boroughs were situated in the seven counties which had returned to the Habsburgs with the death of Bethlen. They were afraid of losing their liberties with the return of the rule of the Hungarian aristocracy, and they refused to take the oath of fealty to Ferdinand II. The palatine, Miklós Esterházy, set out to punish them, and at the



same time conquer Transylvania. Two young Transylvanian lords, Dávid Zólyomi and István Bethlen, tried to save Gábor Bethlen's legacy. The first thing was to help the beyducks, and they succeeded in repulsing Esterházy's army. They invited to the throne of Transylvania the richest Hungarian Protestant aristocrat, György Rákóczi (1631–1648). Rákóczi moved into Transylvania at the head of the heyducks, and was acclaimed its prince by the diet. Esterházy's second assault also ended in failure and he was compelled to make peace. The heyducks remained under Habsburg rule, but were able to preserve their freedom.

Esterházy, on the other hand, did not give up the idea of conquering Transylvania, and prepared for a third attack. The marauding of his soldiers induced the peasantry of the Tisza region to rise in the summer of 1631. Their leader, Péter Császá, called upon Rákóczi, begging him to intervene. In the meantime, the Swedish ambassador offered a military alliance to the prince. There would have been a good chance of defeating the Habsburgs, but Rákóczi, the landlord, had no sympathy with the peasants and stifled their rising.

Rákóczi added no new bricks to the political edifice built by his great predecessor; he rather removed some. He was determined to acquire new estates, and expanded his family lands into the largest holding of that period. Bethlen's main interest had been the development of trade and commerce; Rákóczi, on the other hand, based his power on his immense landed property. Bethlen had not ascended the throne as a member of the aristocracy, but worked his way upwards as a humble member of the nobility; landed property was but a means to central power in his eyes. Rákóczi, on the other hand, as the richest member of the aristocracy, looked upon land as the source of all power. He needed the labour services of the peasantry and had little sympathy for augmenting the number of free peasants performing only military service; and, instead of protecting the labouring masses, his legal measures provided for their more efficient exploitation.

His participation in the Thirty Years War had nothing to do with the distant idea of the reunion of Hungary, his main concern being the safety and further enrichment of his family estates within Hungary. In 1644, he entered into an alliance with the French and the Swedes, and set off to render aid to Tortensson during his siege of Vienna. Ordered back by his Turkish protector, he was obliged in 1647 to sign the Treaty of Linz, which restored the seven counties to him. It is to his credit that he extended religious toleration to the Protestant peasantry in Habsburg Hungary, for the first time transgressing the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*.

## The Cultural Split

The secular culture of the Renaissance of the late sixteenth century gave way in the first half of the seventeenth to militant religious trends. In the wake of the Counter-Reformation, a new Catholic culture was in the ascendant, with the Jesuits as its pioneers, and Péter Pázmány foremost among them. In his literary work baroque style is first used in Hungarian literature. The establishment in 1635 of the university of Nagyszombat, which was removed to Pest in the eighteenth century, is connected with his name. The aristocracy, converted to Catholicism under his influence, became the first patrons of baroque art.

The then Protestant majority of the country remained unimpressed by baroque art. Both in literature and art, the traditions of the Renaissance and the Reformation continued to prevail. In Transylvania and in the seven counties under Transylvanian rule, the cultural influence of Bethlen flourished. Bethlen invited to his university in Gyulafehérvár German teachers who became the spokesmen of the new Protestant ideas prevailing in England and Holland. Many Hungarian students were sent to study at the universities of England and the Low Countries. They returned enriched by the teachings of the Puritan Revolution in England, the philosophy of Descartes, and the results of the newly developing natural sciences. They became the propagators of the Puritan movement, which tried to bring about educational reform side by side with democratic trends within the Church. János Tolnai and other Hungarian students established a Puritan League in London for the reformation of Hungarian schools based on a democratic Church. After his return Tolnai became headmaster in Sárospatak between 1639 and 1642; he insisted on the introduction of the vernacular into the schools and suggested that the Church, ultimately responsible for cultural life, should be under the leadership of an elected presbytery, representing the people. Conservative members of the Church called in the help of György Rákóczi I, who, afraid of another democratic insurgence, removed Tolnai from his post.

There was no way, however, of stopping the trend of Puritan ideas. Under the influence of the bourgeois revolution in England, the activity of the Hungarian Puritans gained force. Their leaders were in constant touch with the intellectuals in Cromwell's circle. After the death of György Rákóczi I in 1648, Puritan ideas prevailed in schools, in both towns and villages, as a result of the teachings of progressive ministers. György Rákóczi II (1648–1660) was no less averse to Puritan reform than his father. But the Puritans, regardless of punishment and the loss of their posts, insisted on Hungarian schools for the

people, and democratic leadership in the Church. Some members of the ruling class realized that it would be useless to oppose all efforts to achieve changes; it would be meaningless to stop reforms which did not interfere with the feudal foundations of society. The dowager princess, Zsuzsanna Lorántffy, extended her protection to the disgraced Tolnai, who was subsequently invited to Sárospatak, together with the greatest educator of the period, Comenius, who taught in the school between 1650 and 1654.

In the year when Comenius departed, the most outstanding representative of the Hungarian Puritan movement, János Apáczai Csere, began his work. He consciously propagated the bourgeois ideology of the English Revolution among his students; his ideal was the educated, many-sided citizen, with a practical turn of mind. He passionately attacked the feudal backwardness of Hungary and its undeveloped industries and trade; he believed that the only hope of progress was in up-to-date education. In his *Hungarian Encyclopaedia* he summarized the great scientific achievements of the age, and he was the first to propagate in Hungarian the ideas of Copernicus, Descartes and Althusius. He had far-reaching plans to establish a secular intellectual class in a country where, as he says, 'there are, as far as you can see, villages numbering one to two hundred families, where only the schoolmaster and the preacher are the people's eyes, ears and tongue'. The prince seemed to hear the slogans of the English Revolution—and not without foundation—in Apáczai's ideas, and the dangerous man was banished from Gyulafehérvár to a secondary school in Kolozsvár. But Apáczai did not stop his teaching or the propagation of his ideas; nevertheless his superhuman efforts soon consumed his energy and he died young.

Apáczai's death coincides with the end of the historic role of the Principality of Transylvania. György Rákóczi II's anti-Habsburg policy led him to seek the throne of Poland. In alliance with the Swedes, he wanted to conquer Poland, but the badly organized campaign ended in a dreadful disaster in 1657. The Turks had long been suspicious of the independent political activities of the princes of Transylvania and looked for an opportunity to strike them down. Transylvania was invaded by Turkish and Tatar troops and Rákóczi himself died in 1660 fighting against the invaders.

## 5. RESISTANCE TO HABSBURG ABSOLUTISM (1648-1703)

### Tension between the Habsburg Government and the Hungarian Estates

The Treaty of Westphalia shut out the Habsburgs from the German Empire, but gave them a free hand in the eastern countries. The defeat of Protestantism in Austria and Bohemia also brought to an end the resistance of the Estates in the hereditary countries of the Habsburgs, thus paving the way for the emergence of absolute government. The Austrian court aristocracy was the solid foundation of absolutism. Nevertheless, the Habsburg government, afraid of the Principality of Transylvania and the Turkish power behind it, did not openly attack the Hungarian Estates and their autonomy, seemingly even respecting their right to elect a new king. The Hungarian aristocracy acknowledged with relief this attitude and gathered round the monarchy; the leading families became reconverted to Catholicism as a sign of accord.

The tensions which made the Hungarian ruling class rely on an absolute monarchy against their own serfs and the Turks created a dangerous situation, ready to explode as soon as any change came about in the foreign relations which maintained the balance. The collapse of the Principality of Transylvania after 1657 deprived the Hungarian Estates of their support, and in the second half of the seventeenth century Habsburg absolutism was ready for a frontal attack against the autonomy of the Estates. The Hungarian ruling class was not strong enough to defend its privileges single-handed, and was faced with the choice of seeking the support of the Turks, overtly, without Transylvanian mediation, or of some other anti-Habsburg power, or else of surrendering to Habsburg absolutism and merging with its court aristocracy.

The foundations of Habsburg absolutism had solidified during the Thirty Years War: the court aristocracy, the state officialdom and the merchant capitalists of Austria had combined to safeguard their interests. The Hungarian aristocracy did their best to become partners in the new power. Their attempt failed for more reasons than one: the court of Vienna showed reluctance to admit those Hungarians who

headed the resistance of the nobility, while the Austrian aristocrats, office-holders and merchants intended to manage the foreign trade of Hungary without the participation of the Hungarian aristocracy. In addition to copper, the Austrian capitalists wanted to obtain the monopoly in the export of cattle, the other important Hungarian export item. In 1622, a company called 'Landsverleger Compagnia' was established, with the exclusive right of handling the export of Hungarian cattle from Hungary to Germany. The company failed in a short time, but was reorganized under the name of the 'Kaiserliche Ochsenhandlung' in 1651. The close relationship between the Austrian aristocracy, the merchants and the absolute monarchy was revealed by the fact that the monarch personally guaranteed the capital in return for 12 per cent interest.

These were the first signs of the protectionist economic policy of Habsburg absolutism and brought about a serious reaction in Hungary among those interested in the cattle trade. Simple traders in the boroughs and among the lesser nobility failed in due course. Aristocratic traders, on the other hand, regarding the matter as a breach of their privileges, protested by means of statutes in the diets, and tried also to divert the cattle trade towards the Adriatic port of Buccari, in the hands of the Zrínyi family. Battles were fought between the imperial army safeguarding the monopoly and the Zrínyis' private army.

Habsburg absolutism in its fight with the Hungarian Estates conducted an economic policy which tried to exclude Hungary from the economic unity of the Empire, treating it as a sort of colonial dependency. It was only towards the end of the seventeenth century that the Austrian mercantilists tried to define the theory of this economic policy, and their practical achievements were rather modest up to the middle of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, their policy was a severe blow to the interests of the Hungarian ruling class. In addition to political and religious grievances, the diets of Hungary repeatedly dealt with economic problems, with the speakers of the opposition accusing the court of Vienna of ruining the country by making use of its money for foreign interests. The representatives of the counties belonging to the landowning nobility were the most clamorous: they were no longer the spokesmen of the aristocracy, but the defenders of their own interests, those of the Protestant nobility, who produced 'The Grievous Complaint' in 1655. According to this pamphlet the nobility no longer expected anything from the Habsburgs: 'We do not expect gifts, do not ask for offices, we no longer foster any hope.'



### The Economic and Political Aspirations of the Nobility

The political re-emergence of the nobility was the direct outcome of the changes in their economic and social situation. The setback in production for the market in the seventeenth century contributed to a decrease in the number of paid garrisons in the royal frontier castles and, also, of the private armies of the landed aristocracy, but the number of unpaid *heyducks* increased both in the royal and private landlords' service. As part of a settlement policy, and in return for exemptions from labour services, a great number of soldiers' villages had grown up. The nobility withdrew more and more from military service, mainly because during the seventeenth century the royal castles employed, in addition to the free peasantry, ever greater numbers of foreign mercenaries, mostly Germans.

In the management of the great estates less and less scope was given to noble retainers; instead the landlords employed as their officials landless members of the nobility and the citizens of the boroughs. They were no longer regarded as vassals, but employees on yearly contracts. The century-old institution of the *familiares* declined and the nobility was no longer under the thumb of the aristocracy, but at the same time they lost the chance to make extra money in addition to their modest incomes. Many of them tried their luck and failed in trade, often in the cattle trade, which was under the curse of the general economic depression. The uneasiness of the nobility became stronger as the central power became more exacting in forcing the Counter-Reformation on them. The economic measures of Vienna made even some of the aristocracy resentful, helping the rapprochement of the Catholic aristocracy and the Protestant nobility to form a united front of resistance to absolutism. Differences with Vienna became even more pronounced owing to the Turkish threat.

There had been considerable changes in the parts of Hungary under Turkish rule now for more than a hundred years. During the Fifteen Years War the country became so impoverished that it was impossible to maintain the Turkish army and the administrative organs out of the tax contributions. As a result the castle garrisons had been reduced, many *kadis* recalled, and far-reaching autonomy given to the Hungarian population, including legal jurisdiction and tax collection.

This lessening of Turkish control was not only welcome to the Hungarian peasantry, but it also encouraged the Hungarian landlords who had fled to claim their rights in the Turkish areas. During the seventeenth century, the Hungarian landlords exercised more and more control over their estates in Turkish-occupied Hungary. They

raised the contributions of the peasants and harassed them with their officials. The counties developed special administrative organs for the management of villages under Turkish rule and during the seventeenth century made it a capital offence to appeal to the Turks in legal matters.

In these circumstances the landlords of small means, living in Hungary but having landed property in the Turkish-occupied areas, developed an increased interest in those territories. During the seventeenth century, they were outspoken in demanding the reoccupation of those parts and retaliation for Turkish raids and plunder. In the 1640s, while the Habsburgs had their hands tied during the Thirty Years War, the Turks began to occupy many villages on the common border and, simultaneously, to restrict the rights of the Hungarian landlords. The Habsburgs, on the other hand, remained uninterested even after the Treaty of Westphalia, not wishing to interfere in Turkish affairs. They had their attention turned towards the west, and were more concerned over the expansion of the French. They had no wish to change their treaty obligations with the Turks.

The Hungarian ruling class was exasperated to see that the Habsburgs did not take steps against the Turks, even forbidding private ventures by the garrisons of the frontier castles and by aristocratic armies. Contrary to the provisions of the Treaty of Vienna, the Hungarian frontier castles were garrisoned by foreign mercenaries. It had been rumoured in the court of Vienna that Hungary would not be released from Turkish rule unless the Hungarian Estates pledged themselves not to secede from the Habsburg dynasty when freed from the Turks.

### Miklós Zrínyi's Political Activity and His Wars against the Turks

Towards the middle of the seventeenth century, it began to dawn on the nobility and some of the Hungarian aristocracy that they could not expect any change in Habsburg policy. Anti-Habsburg feeling led to a special nationalist ideology, which differed little from the primitive germanophobia of the nobility of the days of the Jagiellons. The idea of the nation had still been confined to those enjoying privileges but with the protest against the economic exploitation of the country and the insistence on the expulsion of the Turks, it assumed certain new features.

The political and military theory of an awakening national con-



seriousness fills the poems and pamphlets of Miklós Zrínyi, *bán* of Croatia. Only one of his works appeared in print in his life-time, a heroic epic called 'The Disaster of Sziget'. The poem celebrates the heroic self-sacrifice of his ancestor at Szigetvár in the sixteenth century as an encouragement to action against the Turks. Since his early youth he had defended his estates against Turkish raids, and could only draw the lesson that no help was to be expected from the War Council of Vienna. He turned away from the Habsburg dynasty, going first among the Hungarian Catholic aristocracy to propagate the idea of a free Hungarian state in his military treatise 'The Courageous Commander' (1651-3) and in his 'Meditations Concerning the Life of King Matthias' (1656).

In these works, circulated in manuscript, he dwelt on the traditions of centralization in Hungary and on the examples of King Matthias and Gábor Bethlen, but surpassed the latter in giving up the idea of 'one country, one religion', which was impossible in Hungary. His support of religious toleration paved the way for the political union of the Catholic aristocracy and the Protestant nobility, and that of the Kingdom of Hungary and the Principality of Transylvania. He worked for the election of György Rákóczi II as king of Hungary, accepting for the moment the traditional Transylvanian dependence on the Turks, but with an insistence on future action against them. He urged the importance of the reorganization of Hungarian national defence, discussing its possibilities and methods from the point of view of contemporary military science. As head of the opposition in the diet, he tried to realize his ideas, but the Hungarian aristocracy was not yet determined to break with the Habsburgs, and in 1655, the son of Ferdinand III, Leopold I (1657-1705), was elected king of Hungary.

The subsequent collapse of Transylvania proved to Zrínyi that his plans lacked realism. But the revival of Turkish military power and its new aggressive tendencies raised hopes in him that the Habsburgs would sooner or later retaliate. In 1661, Leopold I actually sent help to Transylvania against the Turks, but General Montecuccoli, at the head of his forces, had not reckoned with the difficulties of warfare in Hungary, and not being able to get provisions, he withdrew, leaving Transylvania to its fate. His soldiers plundered whatever was left behind by the Turks. Zrínyi's pamphlet, 'The Turkish Opium', called to arms not only the Hungarian ruling class, but also the down-trodden people, reviving his idea of an independent Hungarian army, without producing serious reaction either in Vienna or among the Hungarian aristocracy.

In 1663, the grand vizier, Ahmed Küprülü, waged war against the Habsburgs in revenge for their intervention in Transylvania. The Hungarian army, comprising the retainers of the aristocracy and the feudal levy of the nobility, was defeated. The court, afraid of an attack on Vienna, sent Zrínyi to meet the Turks. With his rapidly organized army, Zrínyi drove the retreating grand vizier as far as Buda. Pressed by public opinion, the emperor was obliged to grant a free hand to Zrínyi, who during the winter of 1664, in a series of lightning strikes, occupied one by one the castles of the Turks along the Drave and burnt the bridge of Eszék, the most important crossing-point of the Turkish army. In the meantime, the Habsburgs received help from the German Empire and from France, and Zrínyi could proceed to the siege of Kanizsa. Before the castle fell, the grand vizier launched another attack. The court re-appointed General Montecuccoli as commander-in-chief, and he ordered a retreat. He won the battle of Szentgotthárd over the pursuing Turkish army, but in the difficult international situation, the court did not exploit the victory. The Treaty of Vasvár was signed in the same year (1664) giving up all the territories recently conquered by the Turks.

The Treaty of Vasvár exasperated the Hungarian ruling class as well as the people newly subjected to the Turks, not to speak of the garrisons of the Hungarian castles which were dismissed on the plea of peace. The treaty was, however, not unwelcome for the merchant capitalists of Austria. They exerted their influence on the court of Vienna to be lenient with the Turks because they had received privileges from the sultan at the expense of the eastern trade of the French. To exploit these the 'Orientalische Compagnia' was founded with the capital of the Austrian aristocrats and merchants. It established factories for producing woollen fabrics to be exported to the Turkish Empire, and for weaving silk cloth from imported raw silk, and, last but not least, it controlled the cattle trade of Hungary. There was again a loud protest from the Hungarian merchants concerned, and even the Hungarian chamber administering royal revenues insisted on a return to free trade, because the monopolies of the Compagnia severely cut down the customs revenues.

Zrínyi was killed in 1664 by a boar while hunting. After his death, induced by the loss of territories and by renewed economic grievances, the Hungarian aristocracy and clergy, tolerant toward the Habsburgs until now, turned to Louis XIV, hoping to recover their freedom with the help of French aid.

### The Conspiracy of the Aristocracy and the Kuruc Rising

The fifty-year struggle of Louis XIV against the Habsburgs offered the Hungarian ruling class the possibility of foreign aid in their struggle against the introducing of Habsburg absolutism. Leadership was in the hands of the palatine, Ferenc Wesselényi, and after his death it fell to the temperamental Péter Zrínyi, Miklós's brother. Their conspiracy was discovered in 1670 by the court. Some of the leaders were executed, others managed to flee to Transylvania. This was the beginning of a bloody terror. The estates of the conspirators were confiscated, Protestant preachers accused of anti-Habsburg propaganda were imprisoned and sold as galley-slaves, and the political autonomy of Hungary and toleration of the Protestants were suspended. Towns and villages were victimized and plundered by the imperial soldiers, who came into the country in swarms. This terror achieved conditions in which the ruling class in its final plight was able to win wide support among the people for the defence of their common country.

Péter Zrínyi promised exemption from dues to any serf fighting against the Habsburgs, and the promise was repeatedly renewed by each leader of any anti-Habsburg faction. The serfs did not fight to defend the landlord's power, but for their own interests, and to ease their feudal burdens. This was not a mere illusion, because the anti-Habsburg aristocracy and nobility, badly needing the support of the peasants, kept their promises—however reluctantly and even retreating at times—so that channels were opened for the serfs to rise into the lower ranks of the nobility and into the free status of the heyducks.

The system of perpetual serfdom also began to loosen its tight grip under the effect of economic development. About the middle of the century, the peasantry began to gain some ground in its fight against labour services. Scores of serfs fled to the boroughs, while others assumed nobility and heyduck privileges. With the impoverishment of the remaining peasantry, labour service diminished until the existence of the production system based on it was threatened. Landlords were obliged to try to employ hired labour. In the 1650s, on certain estates, it became possible for the peasantry, especially in the boroughs, to commute their labour service and contributions. From the money received, labour was engaged and oxen bought to cultivate the manorial land. Where, owing to the lack of money, it was impossible for feudal dues and labour services to be commuted collectively, the well-to-do peasants were permitted to commute their services, one by

one, in a lump sum. These peasants thus fell into the category of the tax-paying, landless small nobility. Some peasant settlements were granted collective heyduck privileges. The trend of economic development thus coincided with the easing of the strictness of perpetual serfdom out of political necessity.

The active participation of the peasantry in the anti-Habsburg struggle started, as at the time of the Bocskai rising, through sections of the peasantry entering active military service. Then it was the heyduck, now the soldier dismissed from castle service, who first joined the anti-Habsburg movement of the Hungarian ruling class. The *kuruc* army was organized around the nobility who had fled to Transylvania. The origin of the word *kuruc* goes back to the crusades against the Turks, deriving from the Latin *cruciatus*. During Dózsa's peasant uprising, the name became associated with the anti-feudal peasant wars, and was used in that sense throughout the second half of the seventeenth century. The refugee armies were derisively referred to under that name by the pro-Habsburg members of the ruling class to frighten off the landed nobility from joining. The refugee leaders adopted the nickname to win the confidence of the wide masses of people, and in due course a new nickname was applied to their opponents, the pro-Habsburg party, that of *labanc*, deriving perhaps from the German *Landsknecht*.

The majority of the Hungarian ruling class, however, was more afraid of the *kuruc* movement than of Habsburg oppression and held aloof. The first attacks of the 'refugees' on the imperial armies failed. The puppet prince of Transylvania, Mihály Apafi (1661–1690), closely controlled by the Turks, could give them hardly any help, except asylum. They knew, however, that their success would depend on considerable foreign aid. Through Transylvanian mediation they obtained help first from the Turks. Then, in 1675, Louis XIV, happy to see the Habsburgs troubled by diversions within their territories, promised material help and training officers for the *kuruc* movement. Turkish auxiliary troops and French money enabled the young *kuruc* leader, Imre Thököly (a descendant of a peasant family which became wealthy in the cattle trade and was received into the aristocracy), to win many battles. Within a short time he occupied the north-eastern part of the country and was acclaimed prince by his adherents.

In the meantime, the social structure of the *kuruc* movement underwent considerable changes. The *kuruc* army became a regular mercenary force, partly absorbing and partly excluding from itself those elements of the peasantry who had originally joined them for anti-feudal objectives. The *kuruc* state became after its foundation a feudal

one. It did not ease the condition of the peasantry, and the landed nobility only fared better as long as they were actively fighting against Habsburg absolutism, in the defence of their privileges.

The Habsburg government, heavily engaged in fighting against the French, came to realize that it could not succeed against the *kuruc* by force, and so it decided to end its absolutist methods. In 1681, a diet was called which restored the autonomous government of the country, and also granted partial toleration to the Protestants. A general amnesty and a promise to return their estates won back the majority of the *kuruc* nobility to the Habsburgs. The *kuruc* army, on the other hand, was firmly against the armistice, fearing the loss of its livelihood, and Thököly and some of his adherents continued to resist. The *kuruc* principality, however, torn by internal disunity, was swallowed up in the Habsburg-Turkish wars.

#### The Expulsion of the Turks and the Establishment of Habsburg Absolutism

The grand vizier, Kara Mustapha, set the Turkish army in motion against Vienna in 1683, but suffered a decisive defeat. Thököly did not participate in the warfare, and his offer to rid the country of the Turkish army after its defeat was rejected by the Emperor Leopold. The latter was not willing to negotiate with him even at the request of John Sobieski, King of Poland, who had been responsible for the liberation of Vienna from the Turkish siege.

The international army of the Habsburgs, under the command of Charles of Lorraine, later under Eugene of Savoy, inflicted defeat after defeat on the Turks. In 1686, Buda was occupied; the following year Transylvania was invaded, and, although Turkish resistance revived from time to time, the war was concluded with the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, when the sultan resigned his right over most of Hungary. Thököly tried in vain to keep his camp from dissolution by promising villages to his troops for future settlement. The majority of his soldiers joined in the wars against the Turks. Thököly, however, did not give up, and in the end differed little himself from a Turkish mercenary leader. After the treaty, with some trusted followers, he chose to live in Turkish territory until his death. His heroic wife, Ilona Zrínyi, followed him, after defending for years the last stronghold of *kuruc* resistance, the castle of Munkács.

The war was used by the Habsburg government to introduce virtually absolute rule into Hungary. In 1687 a diet was called again,

but only in order to proclaim, under threat of arms, the right of succession of the Habsburgs, without election, and to abolish the right of the nobility to resist illegal actions of the king, secured to them by the 'Golden Bull' of the thirteenth century. Thus Hungary became legally one of the Habsburgs' hereditary provinces, and the autonomy of the Estates, although it continued on paper, could never come into force with the country occupied by the imperial army.

The material burden of the war was borne mainly by Hungary. Supplies for the army came mostly from peasant dues, and between 1685 and 1689 a sum of twenty million forints was extorted by means of taxation from all Hungary. New forms of taxes, so far unknown in Hungary, were levied, such as purchase tax. The rise in the price of salt was a severe blow to all. The nobility were deeply concerned at the breach in their tax-free status. The diet of 1687 tried to fend off the danger by making the small nobility without serfs bear the brunt, but soon the landed nobility were also forced to pay periodic lump sums in lieu of more regular taxation.

The cherished hope of the ruling class of reclaiming their ancient lands after the expulsion of the Turks met with bitter disappointment. The Habsburg government set up a commission, known as *neo-acquistica commissio*, to deal with the problems of land ownership in the returned parts. It introduced a complicated procedure, requiring written proofs for the recognition of ownership. Most of the families who had escaped from Turkish rule had lost their documents, and with them their estates. Others were not able to pay the cost of the commission's charges, and were compelled to sell some of their land, however low the price. In these circumstances much unclaimed land remained with the treasury; some of it was granted to the Hungarian aristocracy, but most of it went to the leading members of the Austrian court aristocracy (Eugene of Savoy, the Heisslers, Starhembergs, etc.), and to chamber officials and army suppliers (Harruckern, Krapf, etc.).

The introduction of absolutism hit the burghers of the towns and the peasantry more acutely than the nobility. They had to bear the brunt of taxation and the billeting of soldiers; they had also been the direct objects of rape and plunder by the army. Warfare in Hungary appealed to every soldier in the imperial army, from the generals to the lowest of the rank and file, as an immediate source of riches; and plunder was the order of the day not only in the reoccupied castles, but even among the population 'liberated' from the Turks. In 1687, General Caraffa organized a court martial at Eperjes: wealthy citizens and members of the nobility were executed, purely

for the sake of confiscating their possessions, on a charge of complicity with the Thököly party. The city of Debrecen was obliged to pay 1,800,000 forints as war damages, which were forcibly collected. Caraffa was the most notorious, but by no means the only extortionist, the smaller ones only lacking executive powers, not insistence. The revenue of the treasury was seriously threatened by the army's abuses, until finally it was necessary to decide the rivalry for the administration of the country between the army and the civilian authorities. After 1695, civilian administration came into force, seriously restricting, if not abolishing the soldiers' abuses.

There were many projects put forward in the Habsburg court for the new political administration of Hungary. The most notorious of the proposals was that of Leopold Kollonich, president of the chamber of accounts and Archbishop of Kalocsa. His proposals, called *Einrichtungswerk*, wanted to leave the Hungarian Estates with only the shadow of their former privileges, but also suggested a number of healthy ideas, such as the development of industry and the repression of military abuses, which were hardly likely to meet with the approval of the court of Vienna. Finally, the Habsburg government in Hungary decided on leaving policy unplanned, but expanding the executive power of the chamber of accounts, and relying on haphazard management. What was insisted on was higher taxation and a settlement policy for the depopulated areas.

## 6. RÁKÓCZI'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE (1703-1711)

### Revival of the Kuruc Movement

The country, although delivered from the Turks, was in a state of upheaval because of absolutist rule. There were scattered risings throughout, with the peasants attacking the salt and customs houses, or, occasionally, even the army. The inhabitants of whole villages fled to the woods and mountains to escape the tax-collector, while roaming bands lived by robbery and smuggling. Returning members of the Thököly emigration sowed the seeds of a new *kuruc* rising among them. In 1697, a new peasant revolt broke out under their leadership in the Tokaj region, but was stifled in blood by the imperial army. Unrest, however, did not subside, and the imperial authorities, as well as the Hungarian ruling class, expected the outbreak of a general peasant war.

During the *kuruc* risings, there emerged a group among the peasants, who tried to link up their class interests with a national policy, developing the instinctive anti-feudalistic endeavours into a conscious political conception. It dawned on these peasant leaders that it would be impossible to fight against oppression coming from the landlord and from the state at the same time.

The leaders of the Tokaj revolt selected as the leader of a general anti-Habsburg rising the richest landowner in the country, young Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II. His father, Ferenc Rákóczi I, son of Prince György Rákóczi II, had been elected prince of Transylvania, but prevented by the Turks from assuming his throne, had lived on his estates in the Habsburg kingdom. He had participated in the Wesselényi rising, and was ransomed for a fabulous sum. After his death, his widow, Ilona Zrínyi (daughter of the beheaded Péter), married Thököly. The child Ferenc Rákóczi II was, after the fall of Munkács, separated from his mother, and Archbishop Kollonich, appointed as his guardian, sent him to study in a Jesuit college in Bohemia. Returning as an adolescent to Hungary, he was believed both by Vienna and by the members of the Hungarian ruling class to be one of the staunchest Habsburg supporters. He proved worthy of this

trust by rejecting the appeal of the rebellious peasantry in the Tokaj region, and proceeding to Vienna to join the court. His experiences, however, of the Habsburg government and the influence of his Hungarian friends, first among them the young aristocrat Miklós Bercsényi, convinced him that he could not turn his back on a mission for which he was fitted both by the traditions of his family and by his enormous fortune. He therefore set himself in the forefront of the fight against the Habsburgs, who were plundering his country and depriving the Hungarian ruling class of its hereditary privileges.

The War of the Spanish Succession seemed to provide a splendid opportunity for Rákóczi and the nobility around him to start hostilities against the Habsburgs, aiming first of all at restoring the independent Principality of Transylvania. Rákóczi appealed to Louis XIV in the capacity of the legal successor of the Transylvanian princes in their alliance with the kings of France. The conspiracy was discovered in its initial stages by the Habsburg authorities, and Rákóczi was arrested and dragged to the prison of Wienerneustadt, where his grandfather had been executed. He succeeded, however, in escaping to Poland where Bercsényi was expecting him. His attempt to organize a revolt from beyond the frontiers proved futile, since neither the aristocracy nor the landed nobility answered his appeal.

It was again the peasantry which intervened. An outlaw leader, a former serf of Rákóczi, Tamás Esze, got into contact with the Thököly emigrants, and started a *kuruc* rising under the joint leadership of himself and Albert Kis, a former Thököly officer of peasant stock. In the spring of 1703, he got in touch with Rákóczi, asking him to take over the leadership of the rising. This was the opening needed by Rákóczi to break out of his isolation, and he accepted, appealing from Brezan in Poland to all inhabitants of Hungary, noblemen and commoners, to join in defence of the liberty of the nation.

#### Initial Success in the War of Independence

The Hungarian ruling class received the appeal of Brezan and the arrival of the peasant troops crossing the frontier under Rákóczi with mixed feelings. They regarded the rising as a desperate adventure by Rákóczi and thought it risky to revive the peasant war. The peasant masses were not moved by being regarded as part of 'the nation', but Rákóczi's promise that all those fighting against the Austrians would become free was a great incentive. In the initial stages it was not made clear if Rákóczi's promise was valid only for the time of the fighting,

yet the peasantry regarded Rákóczi as 'the deliverer of the poor', and thousands of Hungarian, Ukrainian, Slovak and Rumanian peasants enlisted under banners with the slogan *Pro patria et libertate*. Within weeks there was a considerable *kuruc* army which invaded the Tisza region and the lands between the Danube and the Tisza, reached the border of Moravia by August and occupied Transdanubia early in 1704. The *kuruc* troops scored victories in Transylvania too. The imperial army withdrew into castles and fortified towns.

The attitude of the Hungarian ruling class was hardly affected by the unexpected *kuruc* victories. The nobility withdrew under the protection of the imperial garrisons, only joining Rákóczi under necessity with the fall of the strongholds. As time passed, more and more of the nobility began to realize that only active participation could make the movement conform to their interests. Little by little, under the influence of Rákóczi's personality, the nobility took the lead in the *kuruc* army, identifying itself with the movement and expecting the solution of its problems from the joint victory. From among their number came the best advisers of Rákóczi, the organizers of the war of independence in the military, economic and diplomatic field, with Pál Ráday, the head of the privy chancery, as their leader. The majority of the aristocracy and high clergy kept aloof from the war, regarding it from the beginning as doomed to failure, and contrary to their interests. Only a minority joined Bercsényi and Sándor Károlyi, Rákóczi's first two aristocratic followers. Rákóczi was indulgent with regard to their hesitations because he always insisted that the aim of the rising was first of all to restore the political autonomy of the country under the leadership of the aristocracy. The nature of independence was first defined as under the Treaty of Vienna: Habsburg rule, free of absolutist measures, and based on the autonomy of the nobility in Hungary, guaranteed by an independent Principality of Transylvania. The first step for Rákóczi was to be elected prince of Transylvania.

Since the Treaty of Vienna, however, social forces had changed to the same extent as the situation in foreign affairs. The military strength of the war of independence depended on the peasantry and on the landless small nobility. They had to compromise their differences with regard to the feudal landowning classes, however, in order to enable Rákóczi to pursue the war until Habsburg policy could be forced to make concessions in a more favourable international climate. Rákóczi's decree exempting the fighting members of the peasantry and their families from their feudal dues had not pleased either the landowners or the peasantry. The landowners tried to disregard the concession,



while the peasantry wanted to be entirely free of obligations, not only the fighting members but their extended families, and in some cases, the whole village community. In some boroughs there were attempts to end all the landlords' privileges and occupy the manorial lands. Rákóczi dealt severely with these attempts, but also stopped the abuses of the landlords. He succeeded in temporarily stemming the class conflict and consolidating the social foundations of the war of independence.

His expectations in the field of foreign affairs, on which an early victory depended, met with less success. Louis XIV did not deny him the financial contributions enjoyed by Thököly earlier, but he formed no open alliance. Charles XII, King of Sweden, on the other hand, regarded the *kuruc* movement as an act of rebellion against the lawful ruler. Alliance with the Turks, in the given situation, was entirely out of the question. England and Holland, on the plea of support for the Protestants in Hungary, but actually to help their Austrian ally, volunteered to mediate between Rákóczi and the Habsburgs. The negotiations met with little success, as Rákóczi insisted on the recognition of the Principality of Transylvania, and the implementation of the Treaties of Vienna and Linz regarding the rights of the nobility and religious freedom. Vienna was not ready to grant either, thinking merely of amnesty and a restricted form of autonomy. Another serious blow to the independence struggle was the victory of Höchstädt won by the emperor and his allies in August 1704, which rendered a joint movement against Vienna by French, Bavarian and Hungarian forces impossible. It seemed likely that the only course was prolonged resistance.

### The Crisis and End of the War of Independence

The war had to be pursued by Rákóczi and his collaborators under grave economic conditions. To safeguard the confidence of the people, the *kuruc* state levied no taxes, but tried to raise the full cost of an army numbering 80,000 men, and conduct diplomatic activity covering most of Europe, from customs, mine revenues and the confiscated estates of adherents of the Habsburgs. Copper coins were minted as substitutes for gold or silver coins, and a war industry, considerable by Hungarian standards, was created to supply arms and clothing to the army from state workshops. Any shortage was covered by imports managed by a state-run foreign trade enterprise. The Hungarian ruling class, while executing these grand economic projects, began to

get acquainted with mercantilist principles and practice. The state administration was supplemented by new features, such as the standing economic council.

These measures made it possible for the former barefooted peasant army, fighting with axes and scythes, to become a well-clothed and fed, disciplined, relatively modern regular army. However, most of the troops were light cavalry, suitable for quick, guerrilla warfare; they could not put up a stand in battle against the regular imperial forces. They also had few well-trained officers. From among the many ignorant, inexperienced aristocratic officers János Bottyán was exceptional for his military knowledge and skill. As a former imperial colonel during the wars against the Turks, he had already distinguished himself. The imperial army, on the other hand, as long as the war in the west occupied its main forces, could not defeat the constantly renewed *kuruc* resistance, in spite of battles won.

In 1705, at the time Rákóczi held a diet in Szécsény to consolidate the *kuruc* state organization, the majority of the country was still in *kuruc* hands. A part of the nobility was inclined to proclaim Rákóczi as king of Hungary, but some *kuruc* aristocrats, desiring peace with the Habsburgs, were opposed to their dethronement, declared Rákóczi Hungary's governing prince, and appointed a senate composed of nobles as his advising body. This was to be an interim measure, as Rákóczi himself had little confidence that the war could be won single-handed. As agreement with the Habsburgs seemed very unlikely, he wanted to invite to the throne of Hungary any member of a European dynasty hostile to the Habsburgs. The new victories of the *kuruc* army in Transdanubia, the temporary occupation of Transylvania in 1706, and the defence of Transdanubia encouraged the diet of 1707 at Ónod to dethrone the Habsburgs and declare Hungary an independent state.

Signs of collapse were clear, however, at the time of the Ónod diet. There emerged a peace party, openly desiring agreement with the Habsburgs, and silencing it could not help solve the economic and social troubles. The economic resources of the country had been spent: the copper coins deteriorated, the army was in tatters, unpaid and fighting with worn-out weapons. The soldiers lost hope, and not only because of financial troubles. The officers from the aristocracy and the nobility, without any consideration of the effect on the army, began to order their former serfs in the fighting force to go back home. Their dependents at home were again being obliged to render services. The social foundation of the independence struggle was crumbling.



Rákóczi did not lose hope entirely, since he still had his alliance with Czar Peter the Great, made in 1707, and connections with the court of Prussia. He offered the crown of Hungary to the Prussian crown prince. In 1708, with a desperate effort, he re-equipped his army, and tried to cross into Silesia to join the Prussian forces. His way was blocked by imperial troops, and owing to the mismanagement of his seconds-in-command, he lost the battle of Trencsén. This defeat sealed the fate of the war of independence. The act passed by the diet of Sárospatak in 1708, declaring the fighting peasant entirely free, came too late. The wavering elements became open traitors; and inertia and despair prevailed in all hearts. The *kuruc* forces were in constant retreat, and at the end of 1710 Rákóczi was compelled to visit Peter the Great in person to ask for immediate intervention. During his absence, his deputy, Sándor Károlyi, acting without authorization, offered peace to the Habsburgs in 1711. Rákóczi refused to recognize the Treaty of Szatmár, which was made against his will, and went into voluntary exile. He lived first in France, and later died in Turkey at Rodosto in 1735. Bercsényi and some of his other adherents followed him into exile.

The Treaty of Szatmár promised an amnesty to all who had participated in the war, provided they were willing to swear allegiance to the Habsburg ruler. It also recognized the autonomy of the country.

### The Baroque Culture of the Kuruc Period

Conflict between the Hungarian ruling class and then the whole people, on the one hand, and the Habsburg monarchy, on the other, coincided with the introduction of the baroque style into Hungary.

Baroque style in Hungary, as throughout Europe, was characteristic of the Counter-Reformation. A specific feature of Hungarian baroque, however, was that national elements had the upper hand over religious ones. The two great pioneers, whose influence prevails in the intellectual atmosphere of the *kuruc* age, Zrínyi and Apáczai, appealed not to Catholics and Protestants, but to the whole nation, including, though still tentatively, the social classes outside the sphere of the ruling class. The most positive feature of their nationalism lay in their recognition that economic and social backwardness, reflected in inertia, internal strife, poverty and ignorance, was the most dangerous enemy—a bigger threat than the Turks or the Austrians. They wanted to remedy this backwardness and suggested military and educational ideas for reform.

The nationalism of the *kuruc* period deprived Zrínyi and Apáczai not of their passionate appeal, but of self-criticism in national matters. The political poetry of the nobility in the *kuruc* period of the 1670s recalled the example of the ancient Scythians, of Attila, Matthias Hunyadi and Bocskai in contrast to the bleakness of the present. These poets despised the Austrian oppressors and the Catholic priests, but occasionally also the peasants and their rebellion. Caught between foreign oppression and the dangers of a peasant uprising, the nobility could only desire a tolerable compromise. This accounts for the pessimistic attitude of the poets, and the hedonistic passion, turning its back on insoluble political problems, which fills the pages of István Gyöngyösi, the most popular poet of the age.

At the end of the century, the pessimistic, yet formally over-decorated baroque poetry of the upper class gave way to more serious and politically more progressive trends.

The political poetry of Rákóczi's war of independence is dominated by the verses of the outlaws, not by the poetry of the nobility. The outlaw poets demanded in the name of the downtrodden sections of society the freedom often promised but yet ungranted to the soldiers. A new nationalism, teeming with anti-feudal ideas, confronted the nationalism of the nobility.

The nationalism of the nobility was also transcended, though differently, by the ideas of a narrow circle—that of the intelligentsia of the upper aristocracy. Ferenc Rákóczi II himself was a member of this circle, and so was Miklós Bethlen, chancellor of Transylvania. From a political point of view, both of them professed ideas favouring centralized national government. They were far more interested in economic questions than their contemporaries, and more eager for the scientific novelties of the age.

Rákóczi and Bethlen contributed to literary thought by writing political essays and memoirs. One a Catholic, the other a Protestant, both were the representatives of deep religious feeling coupled with tolerance, which springs from Jansenism on the one hand and Puritanism on the other, both essentially anti-feudal, bourgeois philosophical trends of the age. Both were characterized by intensive self-analysis and severe self-criticism, as found in Rákóczi's *Confessions* written in exile, and Bethlen's *Memoirs*, written while imprisoned in Vienna. Both books are remarkable psychological records, the pioneers of psychological writing in Hungary.

In the last decades of the seventeenth century, science in Hungary made great strides forward. In the footsteps of the Hungarian Puritans, different trends of mechanistic philosophy developed in Hungary,

with some original thinkers in the Protestant colleges. The most important philosopher of the time, János Pósaázi, professor at Sárospatak, confronted with deep insight the teachings of the Cartesians and the Atomists. In addition to Descartes and Gassendi, the great figures of contemporary English scientific life made their influence felt: the professors at the Lutheran college of Bártfa taught Bacon's philosophy and propagated Atomism in the spirit of Boyle. They were the first to do so in Hungary. During the first years of its existence, the Royal Society established contact with scientists in Hungary, and in 1669 commissioned Edward Browne to study mineral resources and mining in Hungary. The book he wrote was the first in a long succession of travelogues on Hungary by Englishmen.

Science in the seventies suffered greatly from the closing of many Protestant schools. For a time Transylvania became the asylum of Hungarian Protestant culture. The great representative of old Hungarian book-printing, Miklós Misztófalusi Kis, worked in Kolozsvár, and the first Hungarian producer-playwright, György Felvinci, also directed his secular plays in that city. The colleges of Gyulafehérvár and Marosvásárhely welcomed the expelled professors and students of the college of Sárospatak.

One of the achievements of Rákóczi's war of independence was to reopen the closed Protestant schools—Sárospatak being the first to open its gates. The first Hungarian physicist, István Simándi, taught in those years at Sárospatak; Rákóczi himself had watched his experiments. Modern history and literary criticism had its pioneers in that period. The Jesuit Gábor Hevenesi compiled a collection of historical documents in 140 volumes; a citizen of Selmecbánya, Dávid Czvitinger, was the author of the first Hungarian bio-bibliography.

Baroque style penetrated more slowly into the arts than into literature. The first baroque buildings were Jesuit churches; the oldest which survive are in Nagyszombat and Győr. Baroque was applied only as interior decoration in secular buildings, for castles and manor houses continued to be built in the Renaissance style—such as Miklós Bethlen's castle at Bethlenszentmiklós, which he designed himself. The only baroque palace of the century was built by Palatine Pál Esterházy at Kismarton.

*Chapter IV*

## HABSBURG ABSOLUTISM AND HUNGARY (1711–1790)

## 1. HABSBURG-HUNGARIAN COMPROMISE (1711-1760)

Under the Treaty of Szatmár the Hungarian ruling class accepted a compromise with the Habsburg dynasty. In exchange for recognizing again the hereditary succession of the Habsburgs as laid down in the Act of 1687, it could remain in the possession of its estates, enjoy exemption from taxes, dispose freely of its serfs, and share in government through the county administration and the diet. The right of succession was extended to apply also to the female line of the dynasty with the acceptance in 1723 of the *Pragmatica Sanctio*, the succession settlement of the Austrian Habsburgs. Charles III, who acceded to the throne in 1711, after the short reign of Joseph I (1705-1711), gave a solemn pledge to govern Hungary in accordance with her own laws and in agreement with the diet.

The balance between the dynasty and the Hungarian ruling class, which had been upset by the brutal absolutist measures of Leopold I, was seemingly restored. In reality, however, no effective power remained in the hands of the Hungarian Estates with which to resist the introduction of any absolute measure. The chief means of resistance, the army and the funds for its upkeep, had been placed by the diet at the disposal of the ruler. The nobility was glad to be rid of its military obligations, and the aristocracy of the cost of its private armies; all they needed was sufficient military force to keep the peasantry in check and prevent a possible attack from the Turks. The ruling class, therefore, expressly demanded the presence of the imperial army in the country. There was bargaining over questions of taxation, but the diet consented again and again to raise it to the very limit, until it reached the maximum contribution which could be expected from the peasants. The foreign-speaking army under foreign leadership had to be billeted on the peasantry and also fed by them. At the same time the Hungarian peasants were dragged into regiments serving in other Habsburg lands, sometimes never to return. The Habsburgs maintained the political partition of the country: Transylvania was governed as an independent province, separate from the Hun-

garian governing council; the southern parts reoccupied from the Turks, on the other hand, were put under the direct control of the War Council of Vienna as military frontier districts.

### The Consolidation of the System of 'Perpetual Serfdom'

The Hungarian ruling class was determined to get rid of those free elements of the peasantry who could again threaten to become responsible for a *kuruc* movement or another anti-feudal peasant war. In agreement with the government of Vienna they gradually stopped the privileges of the *heyduck* settlements. If the inhabitants disagreed they were entitled to take to the road, but wherever they went they could only become serfs again. Only the privileges of the *heyduck* towns founded by Bocskai, which were sanctioned by law, were able to survive as the last relics of a freer social trend. The free *Sekel* peasantry were obliged by the Habsburgs to do heavy frontier guard service from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards. The medieval privileges enjoyed by the free Cuman peasants were lost in 1702, when the monarch pledged their land to a remnant of the Teutonic Order. After long struggles, the Cumans succeeded in freeing themselves and regained their privileges in 1745, at a cost of half a million florins.

The *heyduck* and Cuman villages which escaped serfdom developed into densely inhabited boroughs. Their example encouraged other boroughs in the Great Plain to look for ways of achieving freedom. After the expulsion of the Turks, the landlords tried to stop these endeavours, and even tried to curtail the privileges of the boroughs surviving from the Turkish era. Only the largest and richest of them managed to pay their contributions to the landlord in a lump sum and preserve their internal autonomy. On the other hand, they suffered from the struggle of the haves and have-nots for the possession of land. To overcome the discontent of those thirsting for land, from time to time the local authorities released plots of land for viticulture to cottagers. These measures promoted viticulture by opening up new areas to cultivation in the sandy dunes of the Great Plain, but they were hardly enough for the many landless labourers who were not able to find work because industry was at a standstill. For these people the privileges of the borough simply meant that instead of 'perpetual serfdom' they had to hire their services at any rate to any bidder.

With the restoration of the land released from the Turks, the con-

ditions of the village peasantry went from bad to worse. After a hundred and fifty years of Turkish occupation, living in the midst of continual wars, the population of the country hardly surpassed the four million of Matthias's day. Scarcely more than half of these were Hungarians, as the heart of the Hungarian settlements on the Great Plain and in Transdanubia had been most severely hit. The land invaded by the Turks went out of cultivation; where villages had once flourished and crops thrived, fishermen navigated the flooded rivers, and immense grazing lands fed herds of cattle and horses. The romantic beauty of the Hungarian *puszta*, with its mirages, is the sorry result of two hundred years of desolation.

The war had hardly ended before Hungarian and Slovak peasants from the north were settled in the depopulated areas. The restrictions of 'perpetual serfdom' retarded, however, the rate of growth of the new settlements. But competition among landlords for new settlers made it possible for many peasants to find better conditions with lighter contributions than formerly. The Great Plain was the first to fill up from the internal movements of the Hungarian and Slovak peasants. In Transdanubia and along the southern border, the court and the new aristocracy (Hungarians and foreigners who had bought their enormous estates very cheaply) invited in foreign, mainly German Catholic peasants (the so-called 'Swabians') and also Serbians.

The Hungarian and the foreign peasantry, fighting against flooding, woods and disease, transformed the savage land with tremendous effort into cultivated fields. But the land, broken and cultivated by the sweat of his brow, could not belong to the peasant. The foreign settlers enjoyed far more privileges than the Hungarians: exemption from taxes for some years, the right of free movement, and the commutation of labour services. In many instances they were even given tools and draught animals, yet for all this they were and remained serfs. The landlords only waited until their new settlers felt at home before increasing their burdens. After a few generations the foreign peasants were also considered as perpetually tied to the land, and their right to free movement stopped. New baroque residences were erected in the villages, with considerable empty land behind them, and manorial land, taken from the peasants, needed the continued labour services of the serfs.

The two centuries long struggle between the peasantry and the landlords for the control of agricultural production ended in the eighteenth century in favour of the landlord. The free peasant elements were suppressed and the settlers were reduced to serfdom. By checking the development of the free peasantry, the landlords successfully pre-

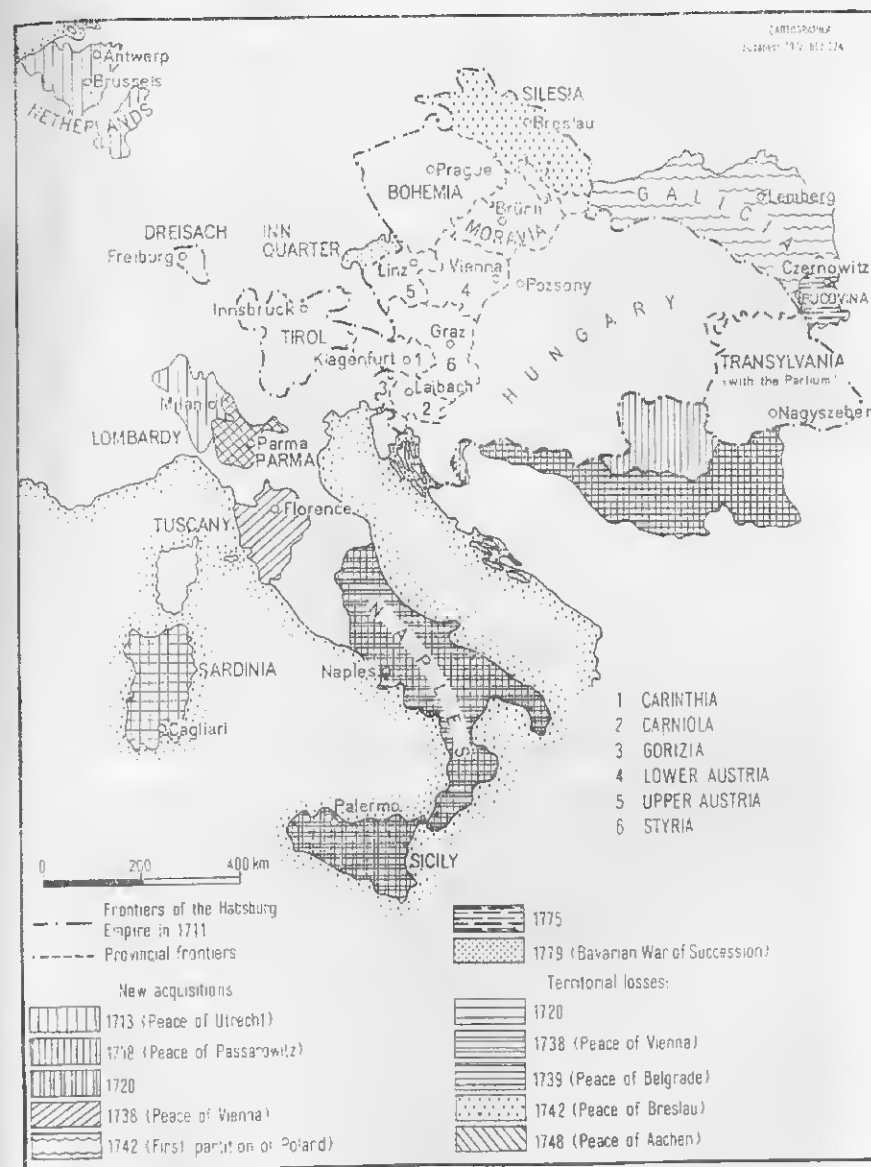
vented peasant commodity production from developing adequately. This gave free scope to the development of capitalist commodity production on the manorial estate. It was not entirely accomplished in the eighteenth century, but its basic precondition, the absolute possession of the land by the landlord and the creation of manors, happened thereabouts. By the middle of the eighteenth century, more than half of the arable soil had become the privately owned land of the landlord, the foundation of the later capitalist estate system.

The real reason why the landlords wanted to set up a manor was not in order to cultivate their fields intensively; none of them engaged hired labour, relying instead on labour services. It is true that most of the manorial land was bired out to poor peasants under miserable conditions, far worse than the land allotted in tenures, but the main reason was to free the land from ordinary state taxation. The manorial land was exempt from taxation, unlike the tenures of the serfs.

Agriculture in Hungary developed a great deal in spite of heavy feudal restrictions. More and more land was cultivated and cultivation became more intensive. New plants were acclimatized, including tobacco, maize, potatoes and fodder crops. Owing to the expansion of the manorial land and the new settlements, the boroughs were left without enough grazing land on which to raise their cattle. They went over to intensive animal husbandry, wintering the animals on dry fodder. Shortage of land also forced the boroughs to produce higher yields of wheat and wine. This was supported by the Habsburg government, as Austria and the Bohemian provinces largely depended on Hungarian foodstuff. The development of agriculture, however, did not contribute to the development of industry and trade.

### Agrarian Towns and Foreign Merchants

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the main income of the bourgeoisie was still derived, even in the large towns, from viticulture. Craftsmen and merchants combined their trade with cultivating their vines, while the upper ranks in the towns went in for vine growing on a large scale. They worked hand in glove with the nobility, who assumed political leadership in the town councils. Trading activity was confined mainly to the exchange of foreign commodities and Hungarian agricultural products; guildsmen sold their own goods at the fairs. The number of craftsmen amounted to only 10–20 per cent of the total population of a town. The great majority were still predominantly farmers who on occasion engaged in trade.



The Habsburg Empire in the 18th century

The development of agriculture finally moved industry forward from its primitive position. New guilds emerged in towns, boroughs and villages, and the craftsmen supplying the local markets increased their output. Handicraft industry was circumscribed by the guild system, and only in the larger towns did it break away completely from agriculture by the middle of the eighteenth century. In not more than 20–30 towns, about the same number as before Mohács, was the proportion of those engaged in trade and handicrafts as high as 20–25 per cent; and the number of trades was between 50 and 60, corresponding in general to the situation in the fifteenth century.

The antagonistic attitude of the Hungarian feudal ruling class was still affecting the growth of towns in the eighteenth century, and the Habsburg government did little to relieve the towns from feudal pressure. Towns had only on rare occasions been granted the title of free royal city. After the expulsion of the Turks, only Buda and Pest, and then Székesfehérvár, Esztergom and Szeged were given back their privileges. In 1693, Debrecen became a free royal city. If the landlord opposed a town being granted the privileges of a free city, the court of Vienna did not interfere. Among the episcopal towns, Győr became a free royal city in 1743 and Pécs in 1780. The veto of the episcopal landlord prevented Eger and Veszprém from obtaining their much coveted liberties. Vác was held back for another reason—it could not raise the funds to pay the tax to redeem itself. Among the boroughs of the temporal lords, not a single one had gained full freedom before 1848.

In these circumstances neither the bourgeoisie of the free cities and boroughs nor any other section of Hungarian society was engaged in the trade of agricultural products, which fell into the hands of Greek, Serbian and Armenian merchants. They had gradually penetrated into Transylvania during the seventeenth century, and trade agreements made by the Habsburgs and the Turks opened the way for them into the Kingdom of Hungary. As Turkish citizens they at first only settled temporarily in the country, taking their earnings back home. Originally they had dealt in articles from the East, but their agility and diligence, and their established capital introduced them into the business life of the country. Many of them finally settled down in Hungary, in the towns along the Danube, forming autonomous trading colonies. In the second half of the eighteenth century, they were obliged by the Habsburg government to resign their Turkish citizenship and lost the privileges it had given them. Their participation in the trade with the Turkish empire thus ended, but they continued to play an important role in internal trade.

### Aristocracy and Nobility

The temporal and spiritual aristocracy regained their much-threatened supremacy within the ruling class during Rákóczi's war of independence. As bishoprics and archbishoprics were allotted to the members of the Hungarian aristocracy, most of the land was concentrated in the hands of a selected few. Within the ruling class, a group of 10–20 aristocratic families became far superior in wealth to the others, possessing large, medium and small estates. The leading group comprised the Esterházy, Batthyány, Pálffy, Nádasdy, Csáky, Erdődy, Koháry, Széchenyi, Forgách and Zichy families. Sándor Károlyi, responsible for the Treaty of Szatmár and rewarded with enormous estates, Antal Grassalkovich, president of the chamber, who had distinguished himself in court service and in busily building up his fortune, and Pál Festetics, a treasury councillor, were newcomers to the group.

The nobility, who were mainly Protestant and numbered several hundred thousand, made up about 5 per cent of the total population. They lived within the framework of county autonomy, and ranged in wealth from the *bene possessionati* with hundreds of serfs, to those who were landless, impoverished and living like peasants. The Habsburg absolutist government managed to breach the tax immunity of the nobility by obliging those without land or serfs to pay, but it did not manage to interfere directly with the relationship of landlord and serf. The extent of the peasants' state contribution was regulated by hargaining between the king and the diet. The members of the lower house of the diet represented the counties (since the sixteenth century the diet had been divided into two houses: the upper house, with the aristocracy and the high clergy, and the lower house, with the representatives of the counties and towns). The allotment and collection of the taxes was the duty of county officials.

The king appointed the *főispán*, who merely supervised the county officials. These were elected by the nobility from their own numbers. The posts of county officials were regarded as *nobile officium* and carried a nominal salary, not providing a livelihood. These circumstances were not conducive to proper office routine. County officials acted only in the lower judicial courts, in tax administration and in the management of supplies for the army. Even if their importance in the formulation of national policy diminished, their influence on public opinion remained considerable. Public health, public works and economic development were only dealt with incidentally, from the point of view of public order. The poorer nobility had neither the



means nor the knowledge to advance beyond primitive methods of cultivation; the well-to-do were hardly interested in the matter, and with good reason, because agriculture was considerably restricted by the narrow home market, the backwardness of transportation and the meagre opportunities available in a badly organized foreign trade. There was little opportunity for more than the baphazard disposal of surplus production.

### Late Baroque Culture

There was nothing to promote economic progress, nor any alluring prospects on the horizon to dissolve the deep-rooted conservatism of the nobility, brought about by the bitter experience that any change would promote either absolutist measures against their privileges, or the unrest of the peasantry, desiring to be rid of their burdens. The dreary inertia of their conservatism was embellished with the slogans of the ideology of national heroism and stoic idealism. The Jesuits, the intellectual leaders of the triumphant Counter-Reformation, were their busiest propagandists. During the emergence of absolutist government and before the Catholic higher clergy were firmly back in the saddle, the Jesuits were seen as indispensable. After victory was achieved with their help, they became inconvenient, but they nevertheless retained their influence on the nobility. With the restriction of the Protestant schools, the Jesuits had complete hold over university education (at the university of Nagyszombat and the newly founded university of Kassa), and partial hold over secondary education and book publication.

The culture disseminated by the Jesuits during their monopoly was no less old-fashioned and reactionary than the recipient Hungarian nobility. Hungary was declared 'Regnum Marianum': the constitution of the nobility was placed under the protection of the Virgin Mary, and her miracles were proclaimed by the establishment of a string of holy places. Fanaticism was aroused in order to convert the Protestant peasants, against their will, and the nobility itself, to the new militant Catholicism. Even the remaining Protestant noblemen were impressed by the tales of ancient national glory, the glib repetition of stories of military valour and the Jesuit gift of oratory. The new creed preached the shallow wisdom of renunciation and the pseudo-stoicism of the golden mean, adopted from Jesuit education and literature and put forward at meetings of the diet and the county council. The Jesuit presses reproduced century-old treatises of religious controversy, the philosoph-

ical works of Seneca and Boethius, and the scientific works of Aristotle. Numerous books appeared giving accounts of miraculous healing at the places devoted to the Virgin. What was more, two-thirds of the books appeared in Latin, as opposed to the seventeenth century, when they were published mostly in the vernacular. The rhetorical Latin of Jesuit education and of Jesuit authors degenerated into a 'kitchen' Latin which became the class language of the nobility, a hindrance to the spread of modern ideas.

The Protestant schools in their desperate struggle for survival could no longer be bridgeheads for progress as they had been when propagating Puritan and Cartesian ideas. They were more receptive to scientific thinking than the Jesuit schools, and strode forward with the introduction of experimental physics at the beginning of the century. Their dogmatic Cartesian thinking, however, placed them in as great an intellectual isolation as the neo-scholasticism of the Jesuits. The most important cultural trend was connected with the name of Mátyás Bél, a Protestant educator of Pozsony. He and his associates became the pioneers of the practical trend in German pietism and of the early Enlightenment in Hungarian education and science. Bél gave the first large-scale picture of Hungary's ethnic, economic and cultural conditions in his momentous volumes on the country: *Nova Hungaria* (1735-42). The first attempts at technical and welfare innovations came from pietist circles. Bél made plans for an orphanage; his friend and the map-designer of his books, the engineer Sámuel Mikoviny, was the first to deal with the important question of regulating rivers. The Protestant intelligentsia, who resented the restrictions on their church and set themselves ambitious economic and cultural goals, did not command sufficient numbers or social significance to be able to realize their plans. Their protectors, the more cultivated members of the Protestant landed nobility (among them Pál Ráday, poet and founder of a renowned library) were occupied with organizing the defence of the Protestant Church against the Counter-Reformation, and had little influence in national affairs compared with the Catholic aristocracy.

Under the political system of the Counter-Reformation, in the face of the backwardness on every level, only the Catholic aristocracy, spiritual and temporal, had the means, power and political freedom to raise the level of contemporary standards by bringing them closer to the Western European scene. Most of them, however, were content to transform their immediate surroundings and adorn them with baroque splendour. Their palaces were built and embellished by outstanding foreign masters. Cathedrals rose in the midst of dusty villages

and bleak towns. Baroque art in Hungary is represented by the buildings of Hildebrandt, the sculptures of Donner and the frescoes of Maulbertsch. The only eminent Hungarian artist of the period, Ádám Mányoki, the portrait painter of leading Protestant noble personalities, was compelled to leave the country and became a court painter in Dresden.

#### Aristocratic Mercantilism and the First Manufactories

There were a few Hungarian aristocrats who were able to identify the interests of their own class with those of the country as a whole. These few devoted themselves wholeheartedly to adapting mercantilist ideas to Hungarian conditions, by applying the experience gained in the course of building and defending the *kuruc* state and creating an independent Hungarian economic policy. It is no coincidence that after the Treaty of Szatmár the very same men who had been prominent in the Rákóczi era endeavoured to restore the economic and cultural life of the country. They compromised, accepted the amnesty and tried to increase prosperity, in order to realize part of the dream which would have been possible within a fully independent Hungarian state.

Time settled many of the problems which had come to the surface during the fifty-year struggle between the absolutist government and the Estates. Both king and diet felt the need for a new political system. The diet of 1715 sent out a commission which, after years of preparatory work, drafted proposals for various fields in the life of the country. The commission had members from the aristocracy and the nobility, together with Sándor Károlyi and Pál Ráday, and other *kuruc* members. They proposed a central Hungarian governing body, another version of the governing council created by the Habsburgs' centralization policy of the sixteenth century and abandoned after the Treaty of Vienna. The economic plan, produced entirely by Károlyi, lays down the principles and practice of Hungarian mercantilism. In order to prevent Hungarian currency from leaving the country and to increase its internal use, leather, textile and iron manufactories were to be established to process Hungarian raw materials. Craftsmen were to be invited from foreign countries and the guilds gradually abolished. Other measures to encourage trade were the establishment of uniform weights and measures, the ending of internal tariff zones, and the building of navigable canals. The draft also proposed the building of schools, the setting up of printing presses and the opening of public

health institutions. The governing body's function would have been to organize and not merely control or supervise. Its task would have been to search for foreign markets, test the quality of products, oversee the central distribution of raw materials and goods and the creation of state manufactories, and replace the Church in control of education and censorship.

The drafters of the scheme only took into consideration needs, not possibilities. The court of Vienna was wary of an independent Hungarian mercantilist venture. The diet, on the other hand, was alarmed by the possible eventual cost of the scheme, and by the danger that a planned central financial fund might interfere with the nobility's privilege of tax exemption. The governing council was actually established in 1724 in conformity with the principles of the system, but its scope, owing to the doubts of the court of Vienna and lack of confidence on the part of the nobility, was much narrower than in the proposal, and of the suggested schemes little was accomplished.

The failure to realize the schemes for the development of state-run trade induced Károlyi to organize it by private enterprise. With the palatine, János Pálffy, and two of the Esterházy counts, he established a Hungarian 'Compagnia' for running the cattle trade and for establishing manufactories. Their scheme failed owing to opposition from Vienna. But in keeping with a decree of the diet that the troops stationed in Hungary had to be clothed and equipped at home, Károlyi established the first Hungarian factory for woollen fabrics in 1722. His example was soon followed by Pálffy and the Esterházy. Until the middle of the century, the Hungarian aristocracy was engaged in schemes for creating woollen mills, iron-foundries, potteries and glass factories. The treasury also established works of its own. The number of workers was small, and instead of employing hired hands, masters from the guilds were engaged on contract. The masters brought their own tools and implements with them, maintaining their independence to a certain extent by working also for other customers outside the factory. These humble efforts did not alter the general backwardness of trade in Hungary, for most of them failed by the middle of the century.

In 1748, notwithstanding the efforts of some aristocrats to develop industry, the foreign trade balance showed the following customs items: out of total imports worth 4,360,000 forints, 56.5 per cent were textiles and metal goods; and out of total exports worth 6,050,000 forints, 55 per cent were cattle, 27.5 per cent other food stuffs and 15 per cent industrial raw materials. In comparison with the situation in the sixteenth century there were only two—rather important—dif-

ferences: other agricultural goods than cattle appear in the exports, and most of the imports were now coming not from faraway Western countries but from the hereditary provinces of the Habsburgs. This was not due to far-reaching state planning but to the inner logic of economic development. The early Hungarian factories failed owing to primitive labour conditions, high production costs and bad management. A protectionist policy could have helped them avoid their initial failures, but this could hardly be expected either from the government in Vienna or from the officials of the nobility at home. A decisive change was to come about in the middle of the century with the War of the Austrian Succession.

### The Use of Hungary as a Colony

With Charles III the male line of the Habsburg dynasty became extinct. The succession of Maria Theresa (1740–1780) was challenged by a French, Bavarian and Prussian coalition. The enemy was advancing into the Habsburg provinces when Maria Theresa entreated support for herself and for her babe in arms, later Joseph II, from 'the gallant and courageous Hungarian nation' at the diet of 1741 in Pozsony. The nobility, moved to tears, offered their 'life and blood' (*vitam et sanguinem*) to her. Their emotional outburst was supported by the sound reasoning that the monarchy in its plight might be obliged to give them more privileges. The throne of Maria Theresa, and the Habsburg Empire for that matter, was saved by the quickly organized Hungarian regiments. Europe came to know expert Hungarian commanders hitherto neglected in the imperial army. Ferenc Nádasdy, who won the battle of Kolin with a daring cavalry charge, and András Hadik, the victor of Berlin, were not just examples of individual Hungarian bravery, but also excellent soldiers equipped with the highest accomplishments of contemporary military science. Hadik became the first Hungarian member of the War Council and subsequently its chairman.

Maria Theresa repeatedly insisted on her indebtedness to the Hungarians, but except for bestowing honours, organizing a Hungarian bodyguard and visiting Hungary, she gave no palpable signs of it. The monarchy remained firmly committed to absolute rule, and the Hungarian ruling class continued to be afraid of losing its autonomous privileges. Nothing was done to resolve other latent conflicts of interest between the industrial hereditary provinces and agrarian Hungary. The loss of Silesia, the richest and economically most developed prov-

ince, compelled the government of Vienna to put into effect new economic measures which even further aggravated the differences between Vienna and Hungary.

The first step in the new policy was the introduction of a system of customs designed to cut off Hungary from its century-old trade with Silesia and divert it towards the hereditary provinces. The Austrian and Bohemian provinces, however, could only step into Silesia's shoes if their industries could provide the same type of goods as Hungary had hitherto imported from Silesia. They were unable to do this unless Hungary supplied them with cheap raw materials and all competition was excluded. In 1754, prohibitive tariffs were placed on all goods imported from outside the Habsburg Empire; all goods except raw materials exported from Hungary to Austria were also heavily charged; but manufactured goods exported from Austria to Hungary enjoyed protective tariffs.

Minor changes were made in the tariffs throughout the century but there was no fundamental change. This rendered industrialization in Hungary extremely difficult. Habsburg economic policy did not treat Hungary in the same way as the Western countries treated their colonies overseas. Industrialization was not prohibited, it was even granted privileges, but the factories in Hungary were run in conformity with the interests of Austrian industry. With the end of the Silesian imports after 1750, many new industries were started. This did not lessen the colonial relationship—regarded even by contemporaries as such—established between Austria and Hungary. The attempt to confine Hungarian foreign trade to Austria, the facilities promoting the import of Austrian industrial goods, and the considerable economic difference between the western and eastern parts of the Habsburg Empire, were enough in themselves to make this relationship clear.

By 1770, 87 per cent of Hungary's exports were going to Austria and 85 per cent of its imports came from there. The structure of this restricted foreign trade had changed little compared with former standards. In 1767, 52 per cent of Hungary's exports consisted of cattle, 26 per cent of cereal products, mainly wheat, 16 per cent of leather and wool, and 5 per cent of tobacco. These figures show that Hungarian agriculture was becoming more intensive, but also reveal a decline in the flourishing wine trade with Poland and Silesia, and, at the same time, indicate the general backwardness of Hungarian industry. Eighty per cent of the imports were industrial goods, of which 55 per cent were textiles; another 20 per cent comprised spices and colonial goods, tea, coffee, sugar, cocoa and fruit. There are no reliable data available showing to what extent Hungarian industry could

supply the home market, but various facts suggest that both the bourgeoisie and the well-to-do elements of the peasantry regularly bought foreign commodities.

The economic dependence of Hungary on Austria reached such a degree by the middle of the eighteenth century that it formed a basis for the Habsburg administration to revive their old plan to break the resistance of the Estates, this time applying the measures of an 'enlightened' absolutism.

## 2. ENLIGHTENED ABSOLUTISM— HUNGARIAN ENLIGHTENMENT (1760-1790)

During the Seven Years War (1756-1763), the need to save the Habsburg Empire and achieve the return of Silesia brought the government of Vienna face to face with situations which could not be solved by old political methods. In order to encourage the growth of economic resources, raise the tax-paying potential, and improve the effectiveness of the state administration, new strides forward had to be made in centralization. The advisers of Maria Theresa were men under the influence of the French Enlightenment, who tried to persuade the monarch to introduce reforms which combine the abolition of the privileges of the Estates, and the weakening of the influence of the Church with economic and cultural benefits for the non-noble classes, in order to broaden the social and financial basis of feudal absolutism. The religiously minded queen could never entirely sympathize with the secular ideal of an enlightened absolute ruler, but she identified herself with humanitarian reforms, accepting as their basis a more centralized form of government.

The central governing body of the new regime, the *Staatsrat*, was established in 1760. Its leading spirit, Prince Kaunitz, regarded the autonomous rights of the Hungarian nobility, and above all their exemption from taxation, as the chief obstacle to centralization within the empire. He looked at industrial development in Hungary in the same context: if Hungary became industrially independent of the hereditary provinces, the resistance of the nobility would increase. He believed that the system of protective tariffs should continue. On the other hand, the methods of Hungarian agriculture should be improved, and with it the lot of the oppressed peasantry, because such measures would strengthen the empire from an economic point of view, thus adding to the deterioration of the political position of the nobility. This attitude determined the trend of enlightened absolutism in Hungary for the next thirty years, and the *Staatsrat* only made exceptions temporarily and in single instances in connection with the setting up of new industries in Hungary—permission and support be-

ing given only where it would not harm the industry of the hereditary provinces.

### The Urbarial Patent and Its Consequences

The central government went on to attack the privileges of the Hungarian Estates with renewed vigour at the diet of 1764. The exemption of the nobility from the payment of tax was circumvented by a proposal that their military services should be commuted to a money payment. Another attempt was made to provide for uniformity in the extent of peasant burdens. Both proposals met with violent opposition; the queen was compelled to give up the taxation of the nobility but insisted on the immediate reform of the serf system.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, the burdens of the serfs in Hungary were generally unbearable. In the northern and western territories where the population was most dense owing to the Turkish wars, the expansion of the landlords' manors rendered more and more peasants landless. In this situation the number of cottagers far exceeded that of peasants with tenures. The peasantry of the former Turkish territories, on the other hand, complained at having lost their freedom, and at increases in their obligations to perform labour services. The dissatisfaction of the peasantry broke out in open revolt in the Transdanubian area in 1765. This development was welcome to Maria Theresa, who saw it as an opportunity to force the frightened Hungarian lords to accept reforms for the peasantry. The Patent of 1767 provided for the exact amount of land to be given to the peasant as a tenure, prohibited the inclusion of peasant plots in the manor and prescribed the exact obligations of the peasant in kind, in money and in labour services.

The Urbarial Patent regulating peasant burdens came into force little by little, bringing relief to the majority of the peasantry. In the long term it undid the odious law of the sixteenth century, which had stated that the peasant had no right to the land. The patent established the unalienable right of the peasantry, in theory at least, to a tenure. The feudal landlords misused the regulation in order to inflict new burdens on villages and boroughs in a more favourable position than that stipulated under the patent. Most boroughs had by then commuted their obligations in kind and in labour to the payment of lump sums to the landlord; the patent, on the other hand, stipulated how much labour service was due on each tenure. Had the landlords succeeded in forcing on the boroughs the procedure stipulated for the

villages, it would have meant the complete loss of their autonomy, and instead of facing the landlords as a community of peasant-citizens, they would have been split up into single individuals. The community and autonomy of the boroughs only served the interests of the citizen-farmers, and their hired labourers or cottagers felt that they had fared worse than the ordinary serf obliged to do labour services. The landlord's policy was to incite the cottagers of the boroughs to break out into rebellion, but the rebels remained alone as soon as the landlord had raised the rents, i.e. achieved his real aim. The boroughs paid a high price to avoid a return to the status of villages obliged to render labour services. The cottagers profited little, because their poverty rose in proportion to their rising numbers within the community.

The Urbarial Patent did not stop the development of the manorial economy. The landlords did not need to resort to the confiscation of tenures for further expansion, as they already had plenty of land at their disposal. The large-scale development of wheat-growing estates started about the middle of the century, with the ploughing up of grazing land, the forced purchase of clearings from the peasant at a low rate, and, last but not least, the expulsion of the cottagers settled on manorial land. The landlords also succeeded in getting the full benefit of the labour services regulated by law. Hungarian wheat obtained constantly expanding markets owing to the war and the industrialization of the Austro-Bohemian provinces. The great landlords could make large profits from the booming conditions by steadily increasing their wheat production. Between 1748 and 1782, the volume of wheat exports grew fivefold, to reach nearly 100,000 tons. Wool exports also increased considerably: between 1748 and 1764, they had not amounted to 1,000 tons, but thereafter they rapidly went up to 2,500 tons, and, by 1782, to 5,600 tons. Wool was also produced by the large estates, some of which specialized in sheep farming. The two characteristic items of peasant production for export, cattle and wine, lost ground. The majority of the slaughter animals in the export trade were no longer Hungarian, but came in transit from Poland and the Balkans. The change in the structure of agricultural exports from Hungary denoted the final triumph of manorial production over that of the peasants.



### The Modernization of Agriculture and New Industries

The great increase in manorial production brought about the large-scale modernization of the big estates. The introduction of advanced crop rotation in place of the old two and three-field system, the regular preparation of the soil, improvements in the quality of seeds, and the purchase of breeding stocks (mainly Merino sheep) contributed to better results, side by side with the introduction of hired labour. On many estates, the new methods of cultivation produced palpable results by 1780: the yield of grain rose to seven and eight times the seed sown, compared with a maximum yield of five times on peasant farms and on the demesnes worked by peasant hands.

The development of Hungarian agriculture became the main feature in the Vienna government's programme, and the government actively contributed to the popularization of modern methods of cultivation. Specialized books on agriculture and stock breeding by Hungarian and foreign authors were published with the help of state subsidies. In 1763, the Collegium Oeconomicum was founded at Szempe for agricultural studies, and the university, which moved from Nagyszombat to Pest in 1777, established a chair of agriculture. In the counties, economic societies started their activities. Throughout the country the regulation of rivers produced new land for agriculture and contributed to the improvement of transportation.

Nevertheless, the modernization of agriculture did not produce changes in the structure of feudal society in Hungary. Owing to undeveloped internal market conditions, the agrarian revolution affected only part of the large estates. The nobility of small and medium means, together with the peasantry, continued to use obsolete methods of farming.

It was Sámuel Tessedik, the Lutheran minister of a borough in the Great Plain, who first attempted to raise the level of the illiterate, land-bound, backward peasant masses. He introduced the rotation of crops, tried to stabilize the sandy soil by planting acacia trees, and sought to make salty land fertile. In 1780, he established the first school of practical agriculture in the world for peasant youths. In his book about peasant life in Hungary, he emphasized the need for better treatment and more freedom of movement for the peasants. It was not only this poor preacher, living close to the life of the people, who was concerned with the fate of the peasantry, but also András Hadik, the great general, the recipient of royal favours, who suggested ending the system of 'perpetual serfdom'. In 1769, he introduced a proposal to that effect at the court of Vienna, but it was refused.

Economic changes had greatly affected the system of towns in Hungary, as borne out by the census held between 1785 and 1787. The most important change was in the western and northern frontier towns which had flourished before Mohács, and continued to thrive during the Turkish era, but declined rapidly afterwards. Only Pozsony, Sopron and Selmehánya had a population between 10,000 and 30,000; Kassa, Lőcse, Bártfa and Eperjes had degenerated into small towns. Among the royal towns, only Buda, Debrecen, Szeged, Pest, Győr and Székesfehérvár belonged to the category with a population over 10,000, along with many boroughs such as Kecskemét, Komárom, Eger, Hódmezővásárhely, Miskolc, Jászberény, Újvidék, Szahadka and Zombor. Leaving aside Transylvania, which preserved its independence even during the Habsburg rule, the greatest concentrations came into being in the central and southern parts of the country, mainly along the Danube. Changes are also clearly obvious from the concentration of trade. In 1777, there were over a thousand craftsmen in Pozsony, Debrecen, Pest, Buda, Komárom, Győr, Sopron, Székesfehérvár, Besztercebánya, Szeged, Eger and Pécs, mainly in the central parts of the country and along the Danube. The distribution of merchants was most typical of the new pattern of towns: the greatest number of merchants in 1777 was in Pest, Buda, Debrecen, Pozsony, Győr, Komárom, Újvidék, Sopron, Szahadka, Szeged and Eger.

The conclusion will be obvious that the development of towns during the second half of the eighteenth century depended to a large extent on trade with Austria, mainly the grain trade along the Danube. The largest towns were those which had become the centres of the grain trade, collecting the crops of the neighbouring districts, and directing grain arriving from many parts towards Austria. Besides wheat, other agricultural produce (wine, leather, cattle and wool) followed the same course. The development of handicrafts complemented this commercial activity, expanding to cater to the population concentrated in the towns. The grain merchant began to emerge as foremost among the bourgeoisie of Hungary, developing within the next hundred years into the typical Hungarian capitalist.

The expansion of agricultural production and the growth of the export trade not only encouraged the humble guild handicrafts, but also stimulated capitalist industrial production. In the 1760s there was a spate of new factories. Apart from the aristocracy, bourgeois capital also established some of these. The new enterprises employed hired labour, together with skilled workers from abroad, and were organized as joint stock companies. Textile mills, ceramics and leather factories and larger iron works were set up. Iron foundries belonging



to the treasury, later to be among the biggest in the land, were established at Győr and Resica. Their up-to-date technical equipment opened new possibilities for Hungarian heavy industry. Gold and silver mining, also under the management of the treasury, achieved a high technical level. Explosives were first used in mining at Selmecbánya at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and in the 1750s the two Hells (father and son) perfected the pump worked by compressed air. Outside England, steam engines were first used in Hungary for pumping water. In the middle of the eighteenth century, gold production reached a yearly average of 500 kilogrammes; silver production had doubled since the sixteenth century to reach 13,000 kilogrammes a year; and the yearly output of copper was up to 20,000 tons. The first coal mines were opened in Hungary in 1759 at Brennberg, near Sopron.

The first, modest flourishing of Hungarian capitalist industry only marginally affected the country's industrial backwardness. In a country of eight million inhabitants, the aggregate number of all industrial workers, including the guild craftsmen, together with the managers and workers of the manufactures, did not add up to one per cent. The towns were hostile to capitalist production because they wanted to protect guild handicrafts and so they opposed the establishment of manufactures. The nobility were indifferent to the efforts of the industrialists, many of whom failed as a result of foreign competition, poor market organization, the shortage of skilled labour, inadequate transport facilities and the lack of credit. The economic policy of Vienna was only one factor among the causes of the frequent failures; the root of the trouble was the massive feudal structure of Hungarian society.

### Cultural Enlightenment

Economic measures in themselves were not sufficient to introduce far-reaching changes in this situation; it seemed equally important to obliterate the conservative attitude which was the enemy of change in all spheres. The intellectual movement of the Enlightenment reached the upper strata of the Hungarian ruling class and some members of the ecclesiastical intelligentsia in the 1760s. The new ideas penetrated directly from French literature, indirectly through the teaching of German universities. Scientific understanding of the world began to develop earlier with the introduction of Newton's physics to replace the scholastic philosophy taught in Jesuit and Piarist schools, and the

Cartesianism of the Protestant ones. In the schools of miners established in Selmecbánya in 1755, and at the university of Nagyszombat (later moved to the capital), modern, up-to-date physical and chemical instruction was available. János Molnár discussed Newton's teachings in Hungarian in 1777, thus taking the first steps towards making Hungarian a language of science. In 1782, an institute of the training of engineers was established alongside the university.

The ideas of the Enlightenment were coupled with national aspirations by young Hungarian guards officers in Vienna, who showed a keen interest in literature. György Bessenyei, a guards officer, was the first to write Hungarian literary works in the spirit of the Enlightenment. He considered it his duty to serve both the interests of cultural progress and the cult of the national tongue, for, as he said, 'no nation could believe itself to have adopted wisdom without making the sciences speak in its own language'. From the seventies onwards, a host of gifted writers enlisted their services in the cult of the mother tongue. With their translations and original works they acquired a public for this nascent Hungarian literature among the nobility and the new intelligentsia.

Official cultural policies followed, somewhat belatedly, in the footsteps of the pioneers of the Hungarian Enlightenment. The queen was not enthusiastic about the broadening of culture. Nevertheless, after the dissolution of the Jesuit order in 1773, the reorganization of public education could no longer be postponed. The attitude of the enlightened circles of the court, that education should be a state affair, prevailed, and the state accepted responsibility for the spirit and substance of instruction. In 1777, the *Ratio Educationis* was published; it laid down the organization and curricula of schools in Hungary, giving added emphasis to the sciences, but leaving the schools themselves to be administered by the Churches, under the supervision of the state authorities.

### Joseph II and His System

Maria Theresa's successor, Joseph II (1780–1790), was a more conscious representative of enlightened absolutism. His aim was the political unity of the Habsburg Empire. He considered the privileges of the Hungarian Estates as its main obstacle. Joseph refused, therefore, to be crowned king of Hungary and he did not call any diet. His decrees aimed at inflicting blow after blow on the Hungarian feudal system. The Catholic Church came under state control and

lost its right of censorship. Most of the religious orders were dissolved, and their fortunes were confiscated to form an educational fund. With his policy of toleration, Protestants and the Greek Orthodox could become civil servants. He won the sympathy of the Protestant nobility and the peasantry who had suffered much from the intolerant Counter-Reformation. The people were thankful for the Patent of 1785, which granted free movement to the peasant, liberty to choose his employment and an enforceable right not to be driven away from his land. This meant the end of the institution of 'perpetual serfdom', although the landlord's property rights and feudal obligations continued. The nobility tried to resist, but the peasant uprising of 1786 under the Rumanian Horia in Transylvania frightened them into accepting the provisions of the patent.

The logical conclusion of Joseph II's ideas about government would have been the termination of Hungary's colonial dependence, the abolition of the customs barrier between Austria and Hungary and a new economic policy to end the differences between the industries of the two countries. The emperor had approvingly considered such measures, and did not hinder the development of manufactures in Hungary. This new attitude facilitated the establishment of several new factories, which came into being on the basis of bourgeois capital in the towns, mainly in Pest, which had developed into the economic centre of the country. Progress was seen not only in the number of new factories, but also in technical innovations in every field. The new textile machines of the English industrial revolution were installed a few years after their invention in textile mills in Hungary, and an attempt was made to produce textile machines inside the country.

The tariff policies, however, which prevented real progress inside Hungary, were not lifted. Joseph II, like Maria Theresa before him, insisted that it was impossible to reduce tariffs, because owing to the tax privileges of the Hungarian ruling class, Hungary provided only a small share of the financial support of the empire, and the discrepancy had to be covered through customs revenues. There is no doubt that both the tax privileges and other feudal institutions prevented Joseph II from carrying out his reform programme, which in turn hindered the development of the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the economic policy of the Habsburgs largely depended on the interests of Austrian capitalists. This seems to be borne out by a statement of Joseph II, that the treasury could not give financial aid to manufactures in Hungary because foodstuffs there were cheaper than in Austria. This could mean that the emperor was afraid that industrialization in Hungary would interfere with food supplies to Austria. But another

interpretation of the emperor's words seems to be more adequate: that Austrian capitalists were afraid of competition from factories in Hungary, where labour was cheap.

Thus Joseph II neither suppressed nor promoted the development of Hungarian industry. It would be impossible to say whether, if he had been able to end the tax exemptions of the Hungarian nobility, he would have been persuaded to change his tariff policies, because his measures against the privileges of the Hungarian ruling class became ineffective owing to their resistance. The abolition of the autonomy of the counties vis-à-vis the central power, the registration of land prior to the introduction of the taxation of the nobility, and, finally, the introduction of German as an official language instead of Latin, turned the whole Hungarian aristocracy and nobility against him. Even the Protestant elements who had wholeheartedly supported his earlier reform measures turned against him. With the outbreak of the French Revolution, the secession of Belgium became imminent, in the war against the Turks the imperial army was beaten, and Joseph II was forced to be more lenient. In 1790, a few weeks before his death, all his reform plans for Hungary were withdrawn with the exception of his decrees for toleration and for the suppression of perpetual serfdom.

#### On the Eve of National Development

The clash between Joseph II and the Hungarian nobility, marking the end of the compromise between the monarchy and the Hungarian ruling class, was more than a mere fight between an enlightened reformer and feudal conservatism. The reform measures of the emperor had not contributed to the end of the colonial exploitation of Hungary. In the given circumstances the resistance of the nobility was not only an attempt to save its feudal privileges but, also, to defend the possibility of the economic independence of the country. There were many, in those days, who regarded the latter as more important. Neither the retarding forces of the class interests of the nobility nor the absolutist ruler could prevent any longer the development of the bourgeoisie in Hungary. An economic and cultural development had begun. The ideas of the Enlightenment penetrated into the midst of Hungarian society, taking root outside the aristocracy and well-to-do nobility in the secular intelligentsia. Priests and schoolmasters, most of them descended from the peasantry, townsmen and small nobility, doctors, engineers and lawyers introduced by Joseph's administrative

reforms into county administration, the officials of the modernized large estate, and some state officials all contributed to the development of Hungarian learning. They laid the groundwork for scientific collections and for the creation of a domestic press, and worked out a programme for the technical development of the country, all in keeping with a future independent Hungary. Reviving Hungarian nationalism not only started an offensive against feudal backwardness and Austrian oppression, but also led to a plan for the Magyarization of the non-Hungarian population of the country.

Hungarian hegemony was exercised over a population of 8 million, with Slovak, Rumanian, Croatian, Serbian, Ruthenian and German nationalities together forming an absolute majority. This hegemony was due to the Hungarian tongue of the majority of the feudal ruling class. Only the Croatian people had a feudal ruling class and a feudal autonomy of their own. In Hungary and Transylvania, the majority of the town population were German and Hungarian, in Croatia German and Croatian. Among the Serbians, the immigrant Balkan merchants, among the Slovaks the lower-middle-class elements of the towns represented the future national bourgeoisie. There were only a few Rumanian and Ruthenian elements in the Hungarian and German populations of the towns. The bourgeoisie, however, of whatever tongue, represented only a minor economic and political force. The 90 per cent peasant population, most of them serfs, represented a force in the emerging national struggles between the Hungarian and non-Hungarian bourgeois elements in the country, only because of their numbers and their linguistic and religious conservatism.

In Rákóczi's war of independence, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Germans and Hungarians had fought side by side against Habsburg oppression. The Habsburgs themselves could only rely on the Croats, and, after the expulsion of the Turks, on the Serbians invited to settle in Hungary. It was not language, but religious and social antagonisms which had turned them against the Hungarian nobility. In feudal Hungary, only the members of the ruling class possessed a national consciousness; the deprived peasantry were excluded from the idea of feudal nationhood; the non-Hungarian privileged classes, however, were included. The more democratic interpretation of the nation of the *kuruc* outlaws had long been forgotten after the compromise between the monarchy and the Hungarian nobility. The official language of the country was Latin (with the exception of Transylvania where Hungarian was used from the sixteenth century onwards), and, as a matter of course, the citizens of the German towns declared themselves Hungarians and so did the Rumanian and Slovak nobility.

The significance of language became more pronounced in the course of anti-Habsburg struggles, especially when the bourgeoisie and the peasantry became more involved in the struggle. The Enlightenment further developed, both among Hungarians and non-Hungarians, the respect for the native tongue, which became the inspiration and weapon of national movements in the hands of the secular intelligentsia. The latter grew in numbers, both among the non-Hungarian peoples and among the Hungarians, and became more cultured during the eighteenth century. The Toleration Act of Joseph II opened public institutions to the non-Catholics, which contributed to the development of the Greek Orthodox Rumanian and Serbian and the Protestant Slovak intelligentsia. This new intelligentsia defined the ideology of the emerging bourgeoisie and the national aspirations of the non-Hungarian peoples. The controversial and confused conditions after the death of Joseph II provided it with its first opportunities.

*Chapter V*

TOWARD BOURGEOIS TRANSFORMATION,  
REVOLUTION AND WAR OF INDEPENDENCE  
(1790-1849)

I. NATIONAL RESISTANCE AND THE  
REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT.  
THE ANTI-REVOLUTIONARY COMPROMISE AND OPEN  
ABSOLUTISM

**The Diet of 1790-1**

The death of Joseph II on 20 February 1790 left Hungary in a state of absolute turmoil. The crisis in which the tremendous endeavours of the deceased despot had involved the whole structure of Habsburg absolutism, was deepened by the revolutionary mood of the whole of Europe. The revolution of the French people offered an example to other suppressed peoples in Europe, and the wars of Frederick William II, King of Prussia, threatened the international political prestige of Austria. The court of Prussia had already established relations in the lifetime of Joseph II with the Hungarian opposition; these relations were strengthened with the death of Joseph II and were aimed at depriving the Habsburgs of the throne of Hungary and offering it to Charles Augustus, Duke of Weimar.

Joseph II was succeeded on the throne by his brother, Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany. Widespread movements in the counties attempted to make use of the formalities of accession to restrict the new ruler's powers on a feudal basis. The court called the diet early in July to arrange the coronation. In the preceding months there were feverish preparations throughout the country. The radical elements among the nobility even contested the Habsburgs' right to the throne. They repeated the ideas propounded in the literature of the Enlightenment, especially the principles of Rousseau's *Social Contract*, according to which Joseph II, by not observing his contract with the Hungarian people, had forfeited his rights, and the nation was entitled to disregard the Habsburgs and dispose freely of the throne. Strangely enough, the 'nation' only comprised the nobility and the privileged classes, and Rousseau's revolutionary principles were in fact being applied to strengthen the feudal constitution; in just the same way, the conclusions drawn from the first years of the French revolution were that the people, meaning the nobility, were entitled to restrict the ruler's power as they liked.

The influence of the flood of ideas brought by the Enlightenment was visible elsewhere, too. In the decade of Joseph II's rule there had

been no censorship, books could be freely imported from abroad and the humane ideas of the Enlightenment had every opportunity to take root, especially among those of the intelligentsia who, sympathizing with the efforts of Joseph II, had broken with the spell of the feudal constitution. Several such intellectuals, including Gergely Berzeviczy, Ignác Martinovics and in particular the commoner József Hajnóczy, wrote tracts demanding political rights for the non-privileged classes, too, and proposed as the first steps towards freeing the serfs the introduction of hereditary tenure, the liberalization of office-holding irrespective of birth, the general and proportional sharing of taxation, and equality before the law. These proposals naturally found little response in the society of the time; the crisis of feudalism had not sunk so deep in Hungary as to allow bourgeois principles of change, backed by the force of national needs, to form the spearhead of progress.

The diet began the session at Buda in a state of ferment. Before the coronation, the Estates stipulated that Leopold make far-reaching concessions which would have restricted his power. They wanted to have the independence of the country almost completely restored, with the government being entrusted to an annual feudal diet representing the Estates. Leopold tried to extricate himself from this difficult situation, using every political device possible. He made an agreement with the court of Prussia, encouraged the Serbian-Illyrian nationalist movement for independence, supported the anti-aristocratic demands of the Hungarian cities, and employed agents to fan the anti-feudal feeling of the discontented peasantry. The independence movement of the nobility was thus deprived of the outside support of Prussia, while inside the country it had to beware of the movements of the different nationalities, the bourgeoisie and the peasantry. In these circumstances it became safer to agree. The king was on the winning side and in the autumn of 1790 he removed the seat of the diet to Pozsony, nearer to the Austrian capital. Soon after, he was crowned there and his son Alexander Leopold elected palatine. During the sessions of the diet, the Estates constantly gave way before the king and court; Leopold, on the other hand, was not averse to making concessions. Left-wing developments in France warned both parties of the need to come closer, and Leopold promised far-reaching legal reforms to safeguard the feudal constitution. The often-quoted cardinal Act X of 1791 declared that Hungary as an independent state could only be governed according to its own laws, unlike the other provinces. In Act XII the king recognized that the right to create, abolish and interpret laws belonged jointly to the king and the diet. A special Act provided for the right of the diet to levy taxes and recruit

the army; another specified the legal functions and independence of the highest governing body, the Lieutenantcy Council. In the spirit of Joseph II and his decrees of toleration, the freedom of Protestants and members of the Orthodox Church to observe their rituals was codified. An Act of the Diet provided for the free movement of the peasantry, and until the diet revised the provisions for the relationship between landlords and serfs, Maria Theresa's urban regulation was temporarily codified.

In the light of later developments another innovation of the diet is noteworthy: commissions were set up to prepare for 'regular activities'. Altogether eight such commissions were sent out to work out proposals for reform in various fields in the life of the state and society, preparatory to acts of the diet that would remedy the grave backwardness of the country. The following diet of 1792 was to have dealt with the matter. Under the chairmanship of the palatine at Buda, the discussions dragged on for years. The commissions' activities aroused nation-wide interest, and many private individuals sent in suggestions to them. These proposals bear witness to endeavours to turn the wheels of progress, so far stuck in the mud of feudalism, towards bourgeois development. The final proposals, which were ready by 1793, aimed at remedying only the most glaring deficiencies, and had they become law would have been merely conservative reforms bringing the feudal state up to date. Leopold died in March 1792. His eldest son, Francis, who succeeded him, did not dare to put before the diet the mild motions which had been prepared, fearing that the nobility might turn the discussions towards a further restriction of royal power. The court declined year after year to bring the proposals before the diet. When at long last, after four decades, the revised drafts were discussed, they were based on the initial work of the commissions, and on this basis the Hungarian bourgeois national reform movement was launched.

The stability brought about by the diet of 1790-1 did not last. The new intelligentsia, nurtured on the ideas of the Enlightenment, was disappointed at the achievements of the diet. They despised the nobility, who after all the struggles were content with merely safeguarding their privileges. They were disappointed with the work of the drafting commissions and soon after became disillusioned with the king, too, because under Francis the government became openly reactionary. The nobility itself was also disillusioned, for the more and more blatantly absolutist tendencies at court and the postponement of the new legislation led to great dissatisfaction among its ranks. The enlightened intelligentsia regretted that the modernizing reforms



had been put off, while the patriotic noblemen grumbled because the foreign ruler had reassumed absolute methods of government. It was an opportunity for the several factions of discontent to join in a common cause.

### **The Hungarian Jacobins**

The rule of Francis I was overshadowed from its very beginning by fear of the ideas of the French revolution proving contagious: the September Constitution of the French National Assembly of 1791, which deprived royal power of its substance and strength, seemed an example to be followed not only for the radical intellectual but also for the patriotic nobleman. The best elements of the intelligentsia moved to the left, inspired by the example of the French Revolution, and when the Jacobins assumed power after the execution of the king in Paris, and the revolutionary army fought its successful battles against the combined forces of the European powers, Hajnóczy, Szentmarjay, Pál Óz and other moderate reformers turned into republicans and proclaimed far-reaching social reform. The republicans deeply impressed even the fundamentally anti-revolutionary nobility, and by the spring of 1794 their opposition movement had spread over almost the whole country. Police reports recorded increasing unrest and revolutionary activities throughout the country.

The movement soon took the shape of an organization, which was connected with the name of Ignác Martinovics. Martinovics started as a Franciscan friar and army chaplain, and became a professor of natural history in the university of Lemberg. He approved of the reforms of Joseph II and in 1790 addressed a pamphlet to the diet urging it to shake off the power of the aristocracy and the clergy. He later entered the service of Leopold as a police agent and produced reports about the situation in Hungary. After the death of Leopold, he came into contact through Hajnóczy with the clubs of the intelligentsia of Pest-Buda, and seeing rising discontent in Hungary, and approving of its aims, decided to take matters in hand. He subsequently wrote his most impressive pamphlet, an open letter addressed to King Francis, defending the French revolution against reactionary vituperation. He began to build up the organization of the Hungarian movement in the spring of 1794. Corresponding to the two forms of discontent, two organizations were set up: the Society of Reformers, which embraced the discontented elements of the nobility on the basis of independence and mild reforms; and the

Society of Liberty and Equality, which rallied the radical intellectuals for the realization of a Jacobin programme.

Martinovics published the aims of the two societies in two manifestos. In the reform manifesto Martinovics suggested in outline changes to satisfy the nobility and the radicals alike. The aim was to break with the Habsburgs and found an independent republic, with its own national army, independent foreign policy and foreign trade, a free press, a federal system allowing a certain self-government to the various nationalities, and a parliament of two chambers, one for the aristocracy and nobility, another for the representatives of the non-noble elements of the country. In the draft, land-ownership remained the right of the nobility, with the peasants becoming free tenants. In the radical manifesto there were vague general suggestions about an alliance with the peasantry and the suggestion that the question of ownership should be settled by revolutionary means. This manifesto suggested no definite procedure, as in the general backwardness of Hungarian society of that time it would have been extremely difficult even to imagine what direct steps could be taken towards a democratic development.

After the drafting of the programme in the summer of 1794, the leaders, Hajnóczy, Laczkovics, Szentmarjay and Count Sigray, began to organize the movement. It was divided into cells. The first to join the movement were the members of the Pest radical club, but it soon spread to intellectual circles in the provincial towns, the county nobility, and even Transylvania and Croatia. Within a few months, there were 200-300 regular members in the two organizations, most of them from the nobility and only a few bourgeois members.

The organization remained unknown to the authorities until at the end of July the police in Vienna captured the leaders of a similar Jacobin organization there. During the arrests, Martinovics was also captured and during interrogation revealed to the police the details of the Hungarian organization, and on 16 August, the leaders were arrested in Buda. The country was shocked, and the counties handed in appeals over the illegal nature of the arrests. Nevertheless, the rounding-up of the members involved in the organization continued, and by the end of the year, more than fifty arrests had been made. During the arrests and during further proceedings all legal procedures were ignored by the government. The trials were conducted in absolute secrecy, and the defendants were scarcely given the chance to act in their own defence. The government was not interested in the truth, but in terrifying those who wanted to change the status quo. The verdict was correspondingly ruthless: out of the 53 defendants,

18 were condemned to death, others received sentences of imprisonment of various length, and only 6 were acquitted. Several death sentences were carried out on 20 May 1795. On this day Martinovics and four other leaders were beheaded; two young members of the movement were executed on 4 June. The other death sentences were commuted by the king to long imprisonment. The measures used to stifle the movement terrified the intellectuals, and the nobility, taken in by the government's propaganda that the country was on the brink of a Jacobin revolution, turned its back on ideas of progress, and, abandoning even the defence of its own independence, offered its services to the monarch. The country suffered from a mounting police terror.

### The Period of the Napoleonic Wars

For two decades after the crushing of the Jacobin movement, there were no serious incidents to disturb the relationship between the court, representing Austrian interests, and the Hungarian ruling classes. Napoleon, the representative of the *haute bourgeoisie*, no longer brandished the banners of revolution on the European continent, but those of a conquering great power. The Hungarian nobility bore the burden of the twenty-five-year war without grumbling, the brunt falling on the common people of the country. The frequent diets voted without demur for new recruits and more and more war taxes, and even to levy an extra war subsidy on the nobility, although the court consistently refused any of their wishes, particularly with regard to foreign trade. On four occasions the militia of the nobility were called up, in 1797, in 1800, in 1805 and in 1809; only once, in 1809, did they actually fight with the French, at Győr, where the badly equipped, untrained, undisciplined county gentry's forces were ignominiously routed. The memory of this defeat remained shameful for years to come to the nobility, who liked to justify their rights to a tax-free existence by feats of arms. The Hungarian nobility proved equally loyal when Napoleon after the occupation of Vienna in 1809 addressed an appeal to the Hungarians, promising them independence if the Hungarians would break away from the Habsburgs in an open rebellion. The Hungarian nobility saw in Napoleon a propagator of revolutionary ideas, and his appeal was disregarded. Only a few intellectuals who had been involved in the movements of the nineties saw the possibilities of the historic occasion; Gergely Berzeviczy addressed the draft of a constitution to Napoleon, insisting on independence and a break with feudal conditions. When after the Russian

campaign of 1812 the star of Napoleon began to decline, the nobility redoubled its support of the anti-Napoleonic coalition. At the Congress of Vienna in 1815 the shape of the new Europe was moulded, and the powers of the newly formed Holy Alliance (Austria, Prussia and Russia) solemnly vowed to keep the spirit of revolution permanently away from the peoples of the Continent.

### Deterioration in the Relations between the Court and the Estates

The understanding between the court and the Estates suffered a mortal blow in the last years of the war, and its survival until the end of the war was merely a formality. Affairs came to a head at the diet of 1811–2, over financial matters. By that time the deterioration of the imperial currency and the increase in the state deficit had assumed tremendous proportions: in 1790, only 28 million gulden worth of bank-notes had been in circulation, whereas by 1811, the amount had increased to 1,060 million. To avoid bankruptcy, a royal decree devalued the bank-notes in circulation to a fifth of their nominal value. The court placed proposals for reform before the diet, according to which Hungary would supply a considerable portion of the funds in gold for a new currency. The diet objected to the king's having proposed the reform of the currency without the prior agreement of its representatives, refused to recognize the amount of the deficit allotted to Hungary, and to supply the funds for the new currency. During the parliamentary discussions it proved impossible to reach agreement on the controversial issues. The court of Vienna planned to take revenge for Hungary's action by abolishing its constitution and making Hungary unconditionally part of the Austrian Empire. Owing to the new wars the idea was temporarily postponed: the financial reform, on the other hand, was introduced in Hungary without the diet's consent, and in 1816 another 60 per cent devaluation was carried out.

Triumph at Napoleon's defeat produced the last convergence of interests between the court and the Hungarian ruling classes. From then onwards the absolutist measures of the court always produced massive resistance from the majority of the counties. The situation finally became critical when the court sent military forces against the revolutionary movement which broke out in several provinces of Italy in 1820. Money and men were wanted for the action. Without parliamentary consent, the king requested the recruitment of soldiers and the renewal of the former war tax, but the 1820 tax was levied without

taking into consideration the devaluation of 1816, which meant that the tax was two and a half times as great. Most of the counties objected to these measures, and declined to comply, addressing innumerable petitions to the government. In reply, royal commissioners were sent out, and military force applied. After a long struggle, the counties were compelled to give in to brute force. The government, on the other hand, seeing the force of resistance even after 13 years of absolute rule, suggested that the diet be called again.

The movement of resistance in the counties was still entirely based on the Estates. In the same way, the absolutism which prevailed in neighbouring Austria and which now attempted to abolish the Hungarian constitution, was of an entirely feudal character. The clash occurred in circumstances where development in most parts of Europe had outgrown feudalism, and in many countries the discarding of feudalism had produced revolutionary movements. Seeing the flame of revolution spreading in Europe, the court decided to renew its former anti-revolutionary alliance with Hungary. This policy, however, did not produce lasting results, because during the quarter century of the Napoleonic wars, the means of production had substantially developed, bringing about considerable changes in the economic life of the country, which called for more and more energetic changes in social and political policies.

### Economic Conditions

During the war period, economic progress in Hungary was considerable. The great armies needed much food, their wheat requirements were enormous, prices soared, and the produce of territories previously off the beaten track also found customers. Under the influence of the boom created by the war, agricultural production flourished, not only on the large estates which had always sold their produce on the market, but on the middle-sized estates of the gentry and small farms as well. The hope of profit encouraged the owners to produce more and more, and the simplest way to step up production was to enlarge the area put to the plough. The enlargement of the manorial estates of the great landlords was somewhat hampered in Hungary by the fact that the *urbarial* tenure in the possession of the serf was under the protection of the law, and, moreover, was a basic unit for war taxes and consequently untouchable, at least in principle, by the landlord. The landowners therefore coveted first of all the non-*urbarial* land. There were also means of getting hold of the peasant

tenure: at least some of the tenures could be obtained under such excuses as boundary regulations and the portioning out of the common grazing land.

Work on the landlord's estate was mainly done in the form of labour services; hired labour was only employed on the most advanced large estates, but even there on a small scale in comparison with the use of unpaid forced labour. The labour service to be rendered in return for the tenure was fixed by statute (*urbarium*), but the boom meant that more labour was needed, and the landlords applied varied measures to obtain it. The techniques of agricultural production could not keep pace with the requirements of the market. The serf cultivated his own land and the manor of the landlord according to old, obsolete methods. The peasant tenure yielded 2-4 times the amount of the seed sown, the landlord's land 3-5 times; the difference was only partly due to more developed methods of cultivation and harvesting, more often arising from the fact that the landlord's estate comprised land of better quality. Increased demand also created favourable conditions for peasant production. The food requirements of the towns encouraged the surrounding villages to produce fruit and vegetables such as grapes, cabbages and melons, and in certain parts tobacco was grown. In the large market towns of the Great Plain, the members of the city corporation and the wealthy farmers extended their land at the expense of the poorer people by expropriating the common land for grazing, and took more and more grain, cattle and wool to market. The increase in agricultural production accelerated the differentiation process among the peasantry, creating side by side with the fundamental distinction between landlord and peasant a virtually capitalist distinction between the wealthy and the poor sections of the peasantry.

The boom created by the war, in enlarging agricultural production, also contributed to the crisis of feudalism. Production was raised to meet increased demand but any attempts to increase yield or improve techniques were balked by the backwardness of agriculture. The primitive conditions prevented the accumulation of capital, essential for the transition to capitalist agricultural production.

War conditions also favoured the development of industry. The need to equip the army with clothing, weapons and war materials increased demand in most important branches of trade, while at the same time the wartime boom led to a growing demand from consumers for more and better commodities. The guilds and non-guild industries could not satisfy the increased demand, as the conservative production methods and equipment used in Hungary were not

adequate. Army orders encouraged enterprising masters in certain trades to enlarge their workshops, and they began to develop into capitalist businessmen. This process also precipitated a crisis in craft industry which was not really brought about in Hungary by internal causes of competition from local capitalist enterprises, but from the circumstance that it was still the Austrian capitalists, enjoying favourable customs benefits, who catered to the Hungarian consumer. The developed linen handicraft industry of the towns of the Szepesség (Zips) and Slovakia were ruined by the cheap production of the Silesian textile industry. Developments proved that feudal industrial production could no longer satisfy the increased demands of society. In spite of resistance from the guilds, capital gradually penetrated into production and industry. After the feeble and impotent attempts in the eighteenth century, the establishment of factories started again.

Capitalist industrial development was promoted by the continental blockade, and by the circumstance that in the adverse periods of the war, the Austrian government needed to compensate for the industrial settlements and arsenals which had been lost, and so established a few factories in Hungary. The textile and iron industries were the chief to benefit, the technology of the latter improving considerably in the war period. The development of the glass, paper, leather, pottery and carriage-making industries was also considerable, though far behind the first two. The forerunners of the first joint stock companies also appeared in the same period. Capitalist industrial production in Hungary, on the other hand, was held back by numerous factors deriving from the feudal and dependent nature of the country. One of these was the guild system; among the others was the fact that land suitable for industrial development was owned by the landlords, that the feudal relationship of the tradesman with the landlord persisted, that those without noble status were forbidden to acquire land, and prohibited, either wholly or in part, to export and import commodities and raw materials, and, last but not least, that there was a shortage of skilled labour.

In the course of this development, there emerged, though still in a restricted form, a more modern division of labour. The percentage of the total population engaged in trade and industry rose considerably. The country's population increased between 1787 and 1828 from nine and a quarter million to eleven and a half million; the number of workers in trade or industry from 34,000 to 95,000; and the number of merchants from 4,000 to 9,000. During the boom many towns developed into economic centres, first among them Pest, Debrecen, Pozsony and Szeged; their populations increased rapidly, and developed a

wider market for agricultural and industrial commodities. The great centres began to link up with the small local markets to form a unitary national market.

With the end of the Napoleonic wars the upward economic trend soon came to an end. The army was largely disbanded, and its requirements diminished. Russian grain again appeared on world markets, English industrial goods flooded the continent, providing deadly competition to the industries of the European countries which had developed during the wars. The most catastrophic effect of the changes was felt in Hungarian agriculture. The small home market could only absorb part of the Hungarian agricultural production which had increased so greatly during the war. The armies no longer needed supplies. Hungarian wheat, on the other hand, was not competitive on foreign markets, owing to its low quality, the consequence of poor methods, not to speak of the high cost of transportation due to the poor condition of the roads of the country. Whatever market possibilities existed in the hereditary Austrian provinces could easily be exploited only by the estates near the border. Owing to the miserable state of the market, some landowners stopped farming and rented their demesne land to merchants, or in small portions, to cottagers. The majority, however, continued to farm, but tried to improve the quality of their products and thereby make them more competitive. This would have required for success investment, the replacement of forced labour by hired labour, modern tools and implements, and most of all money and credit. After the two devaluations, at the time of the economic slump in Hungary, it was almost impossible to borrow money even with ample security. The feudal legal system placed the feudal estate under entail, making it almost impossible for an indebted landlord to sell his land by auction, and, on the whole, generally preventing the payment of debts. The only thing left for the landowner was to raise money at an exorbitant rate of interest.

The estates of the nobility became so overcharged with debt that a boom in the wool trade about the middle of the 1820s, lasting for a few years, hardly helped at all. The quick switch to sheep farming and the enclosure of the common grazing land only heightened the already strained relations between the landowners and the serfs without solving the economic troubles of the landowners. Because of the primitive methods of sheep farming, Hungarian wool was poor in quality, and this, along with the tariffs discriminating in favour of the Austrian producers, pushed it out of the European markets. The crisis in the production and sale of agricultural produce was the most obvious sign of the profound crisis of feudalism. The majority of the ruling class

suffering from the crisis were only conscious of the symptoms and wanted to cure the evil by changing the tariffs which prevented the sale of their products. There were others, however, who recognized the core of the crisis, and suggested that the remedy was far-reaching changes in the social structure.

In the decades after the bloody suppression of the Jacobin movement, all endeavours to support Hungarian independence or social progress were driven underground. In the Habsburg Empire sense and reason suffered the chains of censorship and the secret police, as the Austrian bureaucracy established itself. Reaction and conservatism found a worthy representative in the feudal and absolutist regime of Francis I and his foreign minister and chancellor, Prince Metternich. It was a government that with relentless consistency persecuted all progressive thought, and in such circumstances any attempts in that direction had to be confined to activities less exposed to state control. In effect, this meant the development of the national language and culture.

#### **National Language and Culture**

The question of language was important in the development of every nation during the transition period from feudalism to bourgeois conditions, because the bourgeois idea of the nation comprises not only a politically unified territory and a unified market but also a common language. As Hungary was a multi-national state, when the first signs of a bourgeois, national movement appeared within its confines, the question of language gained in importance. The nobility first brought forward the cause of the language only as a counter to Joseph II's aspirations; the bourgeois intelligentsia, on the other hand, used the cult of the national language as a means for the better understanding and dissemination of the elements of bourgeois development. The cult of the language as a whole was carried forward by progressive forces, although potentially the spread of Hungarian meant that it would be forced on non-Hungarians, too. As a result of the language renewal movement fostered by the writers, by the end of the first quarter of the century, there was a common literary medium available in a standard, undialectal Hungarian. It was a potential weapon for the spread of the new ideas in poetry and in scholarly and political literature. In the initial stages of national revival, the creation of the Hungarian national theatre meant a significant step forward. There were theatre companies in Pest and Transylvania, and also itinerant groups which, un-

mindful of hardship roved around the country, propagating culture, patriotism and love of the Hungarian language. In architecture, the Hungarian version of Classicism gained ground, and on the initiative of Ferenc Széchenyi, the Hungarian National Museum came into being. In natural sciences, statistics and economics Western achievements were taken over and extended. History also appeared in the national language, exuberant in feeling, at times full of romantic exaggerations, yet sincere in fostering patriotism. It was a literature and a culture which started to express a nationalism that penetrated into various other fields of life, stressing in various ways the necessity of social changes.



## 2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOURGEOIS NATIONAL REFORM MOVEMENT AND SUBSEQUENT IMPASSE (1825-1847)

### The Diet of 1825-7

The session of the diet opening in September 1825, after the years of absolutism, was still held mainly under the control of the Estates: the counties insisted that all Hungarians who had participated in the absolutist regime should be punished; after some wrangles decrees were issued to reinsure the independence of the country and for the cancelling of tax arrears accumulated in the period of illegal rule. Long and barren disputes went on with the government about the reform of the discriminatory tariff system, and no agreement was reached between the representatives and the government in the matter of financial reform either. There were, however, moments in the life of this diet, composed as it was of representatives of the nobility, which could justify its being recorded in history not merely as the closing episode of the period dominated by feudalism and the Estates, but as the first scenes of an unfolding new age. One of these moments was the introduction in principle of the taxation of any nobleman living on a peasant tenure. This was the first wedge driven in the fundamental principle of the immunity of the nobility. A similar provision was a legal census of the taxable population, with reference to their financial situation. This measure was meant to foreshadow a more equitable partitioning of the burden of taxation. The law dealing with language, providing for a restricted use of Latin, was a great step forward in the struggle for the use of the vernacular language, a struggle which included all the features of bourgeois nationalism, both negative and progressive. Both from a national and a bourgeois point of view, István Széchenyi's initiative in founding the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was a decisive step: the new institution was to be the workshop of a standard language, and through it of a unified Hungarian culture, and in fact it became a prime promoter of the idea of the new nationhood. Yet the most decisive moment in the life of the diet was the discussion on the proposals for reform which had been relegated to a pigeon-hole ever since the diet of 1791. Provision was made to revise these proposals and it was decided that the next

diet should discuss them. Public opinion expected much from the revised proposals for reform. Before they were submitted to the diet, they were discussed in the county sessions, arousing unprecedented political interest, in the course of which for the first time the ideas of the reform were explicitly defined, and the first germs of the progressive opposition movement developed.

After the sessions of the diet closed, two questions were kept alive in the public opinion of the country: the question of the census and that of the plans for reform. A commission under the palatine busily set to preparing the census, which actually took place in 1828-9, the evaluation of the figures taking several more years. Expectations were, however, not fulfilled, since—in some counties realistically, in others erroneously, owing to the census-takers' mistakes—the estimates as to the tax-paying capacity of the peasants were so impossibly low that the figures, in spite of several revisions, could not be used to readjust the taxation structure. The committee entrusted with drafting the reform plans started its sessions early in 1828, and its work continued, with small interruptions, until the summer of 1830. The government was suspicious even of this most moderate committee. There were spies inside the committee, who sent detailed reports about the debates which particularly emphasized matters relating to Hungary's dependence on Austria and the feudal system. The result of the committee's work, nine revised drafts, gave the government nothing to worry about, being thoroughly conservative in nature: disregarding developments over four decades, they simply demanded a certain modernization of feudalism, and not its termination. The debates inside the committee, however, were less conservative. In some of the sub-committees there were some advocates (admittedly a minority) of progressive views, who demanded the abolition of entailment, the ending of the guild system, the liberty of the press, and the introduction of French weights and measures. These proposals were turned down as a matter of course by the conservative majority. The proposals which finally reached the diet would have served not the idea of progress, but the wilful continuation of feudalism, in its last stages of disintegration.

Before the proposals were submitted to the next diet, there were serious developments in Hungary, whereby it became obvious that the maintenance of the status quo was impossible and the necessity for a radical change inevitable. In 1832, the counties chose as their delegates members of a reform party, which, on more than one basic question of bourgeois reform, succeeded in achieving at least a temporary victory.



## István Széchenyi

The publication of István Széchenyi's *Credit (Hitel)* was a momentous event for the reform movement. Its author was the descendant of an ancient, wealthy, and traditionally loyal aristocratic family, the son of the founder of the National Museum, Count Ferenc Széchenyi. He spent his youth in military service and foreign travel, but after sowing his wild oats, a reaction set in and he subjected himself to severe self-criticism, until he came to realize his duty towards his country. In November 1825, he donated a full year's income to establish the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. After painstakingly taking stock of the situation at home, he applied himself to getting at the roots of the crisis and to working out how foreign examples might be followed. He diagnosed the disease of his country as feudalism, and in the course of his foreign travels he came to the conclusion that the knowledge gained by western countries during their revolutionary transitions could be adapted to Hungarian conditions, and would greatly help the bourgeois development of Hungary.

Most of Széchenyi's trips abroad were to England, and later he regarded conditions in England as model, adapted of course to the situation in Hungary. He often emphasized his sympathies towards the English in his way of dressing. He was a great admirer of Byron. In his economic activities in later years, on more than one occasion he employed the assistance of English experts.

Széchenyi's *Credit* started from a thorough analysis of the crisis and stated that the failure in agriculture was mainly due to old-fashioned farming methods and reliance on forced labour. The difficulty of introducing hired labour he ascribed to the lack of credit; and he was the first to express publicly the need to abolish entailment. He urged the introduction of credit laws which would entitle the creditor without further ado to sell the debtor's property by auction to recover his loan. Széchenyi criticized other feudal institutions, too: the common use of grazing land and woods, the indivisible nature of hereditary property, the guild and pricing system, and he pointed out most emphatically that the ninth was preventing normal development. With regard to the backwardness of trade, he stressed chiefly internal social conditions, at a time when everybody else among the nobility claimed that the Austrian tariff laws were solely responsible. As a long-term prospect, Széchenyi was already advocating in *Credit* the peasant's right to the free possession of land, the abolition of the nobility's immunity from taxation, and the equal participation of the non-noble population in civil rights.

*Credit* caused a tremendous stir in public opinion, but the reception was not unanimous. The aristocracy and landed nobility were largely antagonistic, abusing most passionately the 'unconstitutional' and 'unpatriotic' views of the author; an enlightened minority, mainly the intelligentsia of noble, bourgeois or plebeian origin alike, and the younger generation, were enthusiastic, and Széchenyi's teachings, through the village notaries, occasionally reached even the peasantry. In the name of the heavily indebted nobility, Count József Dessewffy replied in his *An Analysis of Credit*, refuting most bitterly Széchenyi's arguments, insisting that the main reasons for the economic backwardness of the country were the tariff laws imposed by Vienna. Széchenyi remained unimpressed by the personal attacks, but thought it best to reply in a book to the ideas of the influential Dessewffy. In this new work, entitled *Light (Világ)*, which appeared in June 1831, he gave an even clearer definition of his views, emphasizing that the privileges of the nobility and the existence of serfdom were the main impediments to economic development. He again demanded the free possession of land and equal treatment before the law for the peasantry, warning otherwise of the possibility of peasant revolts. He was furthermore the first in Hungarian political literature to speak about a union of interests, the abolition by mutual consent of the barriers between the privileged and non-privileged classes. 'Hungary will be neither happy nor influential unless the common people are taken into the national ranks, unless out of the province perpetually disrupted by conflicting interests and privileges a free country is formed perpetually united by common interests.'

## European Revolutions and Hungarian Movements

The July revolution in France, the rising of the people of Belgium, the Polish war of independence, and the emerging Italian and German national movements combined to produce a powerful revolutionary wave whose effect was perceptible in Hungary also. Their anti-monarchical and democratic trends awoke fear and rebuffs among the ruling classes, but encouraged by their examples those sectors which keenly desired the gradual disappearance of feudalism. But movements like the Belgian, the Italian and especially the Polish, which aimed to end national oppression and called for the introduction of national independence, met with almost universal approval. Uneasiness permeated the sessions of the diet sitting in the autumn of 1830: the court had to fight strenuously against an opposition which con-

stantly propounded the national demands, and the government's final success on the question of recruits can be attributed only to the majority's fear of revolution.

The progressive representatives formed an alliance and agreed that the diet of the following October, scheduled to hold the postponed debate on the reform proposals, should be used to bring up the modernization of the Hungarian constitution and measures for the introduction of bourgeois institutions like those of Western Europe. Unrest and the spirit of revolt gripped the lower sections of society, causing grave anxiety in government circles. There were reports from Paris, early in 1831, that revolutionary agents had started out for Hungary, and there was nothing to prevent the outbreak of revolution there and in Italy. The reports of both the palatine and the Lord Chief Justice described the situation in Hungary as grave, public opinion being such, especially among the peasantry, that revolution might break out any day. The atmosphere was especially tense in Pest, the capital of Hungary. Nationally Pest had the largest population, the number of industrial workers was the highest, and there were numerous university students and intellectuals without property living in the city. Pamphlets inciting revolutionary activity were found in the town and in the spring of 1831 there were constant demonstrations by young people in sympathy with the Polish struggle for independence. Such were the circumstances when Hungary was struck by an outbreak of cholera in the summer of 1831, and large-scale anti-feudal revolts among the peasantry in the north-east of the country.

The cholera, coming from India, arrived in Hungary early in July 1831. The obsolete administrative and hygienic institutions in the country could not control the spread of the disease and a quarter of a million people, about half of those taken ill, died of the plague. Unreasonable restrictive measures by the authorities brought life to a standstill, starvation threatened, and the common people were made to believe that the landlords deliberately wished to exterminate the poor. Dissatisfaction soon broke out into revolutionary movements. In Pest, on 17 July, students and industrial workers together rose against the stopping of public transport, in the first joint demonstration of the political forces of intellectual radicalism and urban workers in Hungary. At the end of July, in the eastern counties of the country, the peasantry broke out in large-scale demonstrations, in the region where for centuries poverty had been the greatest and dissatisfaction was now most intense. The epidemic gave the impetus to the outbreak of long-latent feelings of despair. The rising was stifled within a few weeks by rapidly concentrated military forces, and the county

authorities inflicted cruelly rigorous penalties in revenge for the peasants' revolt: 119 death sentences were carried out within a short time, and the number of long terms of imprisonment was large.

The bloody events of the revolt were quoted to advantage by the supporters of reform in the course of their propaganda speeches, to lend conviction to the argument that the revolutionary energies of the discontented peasantry could be diverted without clashes only by a radical reform of the serf system. Anybody with common sense reacted to the peasant risings in this way, as did Széchenyi himself, who set aside his former idea of serving public opinion, his proposals for reform only in cautious doses, and wrote his new work *Stadium*. Here he argued that it would be impossible to proceed 'with an old ramshackle feudal vehicle' in the speedily developing world, and he set down in 12 articles the most important steps for a transition to bourgeois conditions. The articles included the necessity for abolishing entailment, the free holding of land by the peasantry, equality before the law and equal taxation—all the demands which furnished the essence of liberalism. His book could not be published in Hungary and was printed abroad, and smuggled copy by copy into the country in the autumn of 1833.

The European revolutionary movements, Széchenyi's books, and the lessons of the peasants' risings, furnished a common platform on which all reform movements could join forces and work out the practical details of change. The drafting of the initial procedures for a bourgeois transformation was carried out by the progressive groups of the county nobility most interested in commodity production, in the course of county meetings to discuss the reform proposals. Discussion of the palatine's official proposals began in the spring of 1831, and lasted until autumn 1832, interrupted only by the cholera epidemic. The diet planned for October 1831 was indefinitely adjourned by the court on account of the epidemic. Discussions continued in the counties amid lively public interest, and the proposals of the delegated committees were officially approved. This gave the delegates an accepted text to refer to when the proposals for reform came up for debate before the diet. The ideas the progressive counties brought forward to radically change the previous, basically conservative proposals were those which had first found voice in Széchenyi's works, especially *Stadium*; most counties added further provisions to safeguard the nation's autonomy. The nobility leading the county movements, the propagators of a progressive liberal ideology, surpassed Széchenyi in this question, rightly pointing out that bourgeois transformation could open wide the gates of development for the whole nation,

but only if it could independently dispose of its fate. This claim was put forward in the clause dealing with constitutional changes, in which the representatives of the nobility tried to restrict the influence of the king on legislation and the administration, and later in the trade debate, where the representatives wanted the diet to control foreign trade and tariff matters, instead of their being within the sphere of the royal prerogative. National independence was the most important feature of the county proposals in matters of education, religion and mining; in these fields the king had assumed absolute control and the county proposals endeavoured to restrict it.

On the question of national autonomy most counties substantially agreed; operative principles had been decided upon at the meetings of the previous diet's opposition. Similar lobbying originated from the most progressive counties on the question of a change-over to bourgeois conditions, but with considerably less success. It was a tremendous achievement that in the question of the urban regulation, more than half of the counties agreed upon the redemption of feudal services by voluntary agreement. Many counties even insisted as well on the abolition of forced labour, the landowner's jurisdiction and the ninth. The most important questions with regard to the liberation of the serfs, however, were dealt with in the debate on legal changes as proposed in the relevant chapters of the draft of a civil code. Many counties insisted on the peasant's right to freehold property, safeguarding his person and property from any abuse. There were other liberal proposals such as the liberty of the press, the abolition of the *fidei commissum*, the discontinuance of the guild system, etc. Széchenyi's basic demand, however, the abolition of entailment, met with the sympathy of only seven counties.

The relatively favourable outcome of the debates on the reform proposals, however, did not mean that the majority of the nobility agreed on a programme for bourgeois transformation, nor, moreover, that they were ready to carry it out. Even on the eve of the 1848 revolution, the majority of the landed nobility had still to reach that stage. There were only small groups led by outstanding men, who tried to adapt their propaganda to local conditions, singling out the benefit to the landowners, and especially the danger of repeated peasant risings, in order to achieve success in the committees and general assemblies.

Baron Miklós Wesselényi had no small share of the credit for seeing that Széchenyi's ideas were introduced into the proposals, together with an additional emphasis on national autonomy. As a Transylvanian landowner he felt the crisis of feudalism more keenly because

Transylvania was more exposed to the absolutism of the Habsburgs, and he himself was susceptible to the idea of independence. In the diet of 1830 he was the leader of the opposition; it was he who organized the sessions where the counties discussed their tactics. As an 'itinerant patriot' he visited many counties, indefatigably arguing for the acceptance of the opposition proposals. In contrast to Széchenyi, who could only imagine the transformation taking place with the agreement of the Habsburgs, Wesselényi was ready to fight for the nation's independence to the extent of fully breaking with Vienna. The liberal opposition by then regarded Wesselényi as its leader, and Wesselényi, although a member of the upper house, filled that role in the first period of the diet.

### The Reform Diet, 1832-6

The long-expected diet was called by the king for 16 December 1832. The aims of the opposition in the diet were summarized by the representative of Szatmár County, Ferenc Kölcsey, in his diary: 'The constitution must make room for the people, so that ten million of them will regard it as their own and not merely the affair of seven hundred thousand privileged individuals.' The government proposals for the agenda put the representatives in a difficult dilemma: instead of the trade proposals which the nobility wanted as the first item the reforms concerning the urban regulation were put forward by the government, in the hope that the representatives of the nobility would throw them out, thereby compromising themselves in the eyes of the peasants eagerly awaiting the reform of statute labour. The opposition, on the other hand, saw through the strategy, and after some discussions and much untiring effort by Wesselényi accepted the government's agenda.

The preliminary skirmishes brought no success to the opposition. A motion calling for a free, uncensored newspaper to report on the parliamentary debates did not win a majority vote even in the lower house; and another attempt to ensure the publication of the minutes of the district sessions was equally unsuccessful. Another motion for more religious freedom for the Protestants also failed. Members of the upper house, after six months' debate, obstinately refused to send it for approval to the king. This motion was raised not merely to revive old political grievances, but because the opposition, by proposing the remedying of religious wrongs, hoped to contribute to the bourgeois idea of a united nation.

The debate on the urbarial regulation started at the end of January 1833 and continued with many interruptions to the end of November when the new urbarial law could be sent up to the king for approval. The majority of the lower house supported the free sale of the usufruct of the tenure. The motion for the redemption of feudal services also received majority support. Many counties were willing to agree to the free possession of land by the peasants. Legal matters between landlord and serf were removed from the landlord's jurisdiction and were referred to the law courts of the county. A special article was added providing for the security of the serf's person and property against any abuse. In long debates the opposition managed to break the tenacious resistance of the upper house and on 19 November 1833, eight bills dealing with urbarial matters were submitted to the king. The king, however, refused to sign the most important items, such as the bills on voluntary redemption and the transfer of jurisdiction and the bill providing for the security of the serf. He suggested many other modifications, too, and the whole package was returned to the diet for new discussion and revision. The representatives tried to relieve the serf of the burden of his legal fetters and open before him the way to rise socially and economically, but treated more stringently the proposals from which the peasants would have derived immediate benefit. The government, however, did not want the nobility to get closer to the peasantry by its steps towards the legal liberation of the serf and to win itself the support of the peasantry by its policy of union of interest. The proposals concerning the urbarial regulation thus went back to the lower house, and since meanwhile the government had succeeded in winning over many counties to a more reactionary view, effectively demolishing the earlier liberal majority, at the end of 1834 all three progressive proposals were voted down.

It was in the same year that a nobleman from Transylvania, Sándor Bölöni Farkas, published a travel book about his visit to England and the United States in 1831. The book discussed the liberal policies obtaining there and this had a great impact on the reform movement. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences was quick to admit Bölöni among its members.

The first reform diet did not fulfil earlier expectations in other respects either. During its long life of three years and a half, in addition to the urbarial motions, only preliminary discussions on some legal proposals took place. Towards the end of the parliamentary sessions, the representatives came to the conclusion that the thorough discussion of the nine reform proposals would take decades, and voluntarily gave up the idea of proceeding with the debates.

In spite of its many failures, this diet made some important changes for the better. It was a definite achievement that the usufruct of the tenure could be offered for sale, that the serfs were relieved of some minor burdens and that the nobleman using the peasant tenure was *de facto* obliged to pay tax. The enclosure of hitherto common pasture was facilitated and the dues on second crop and barren land were lifted. Each of these was significant, but the last two especially favourably influenced the expansion of peasant production and the development of capitalist conditions. The nobility took over from the peasantry the responsibility of defraying the costs of the diet. The law concerning a permanent bridge in Pest obliged the nobility to pay toll charges, thus driving another wedge into their immunity. Another law provided for the formation of limited companies to build the main railway line of the country, and again the expropriation of the required territory meant the infringement of feudal property rights in the interests of bourgeois development. New measures were passed to enforce the repayment of debts. A law providing for the annexation to Hungary of the so-called Partium, an area neighbouring Transylvania, was a further realization of the bourgeois idea of a united nation.

Another step forward was made towards bourgeois nationhood by the passing of the language law providing for the first or exclusive use of Hungarian in legislation, the courts and the Church. This measure must be called progressive in that it broke the dominance of the dead Latin tongue, and also ended distinctions among the ranks of the nobility themselves. On the other hand, the practical application of the provision restricted the development of the nationalities speaking other languages.

#### Lajos Kossuth and the Opposition Breakthrough

From the point of view of future developments, the diet of 1832-6 was characterized by the momentous event of Lajos Kossuth's first political appearance. Kossuth came from a poor gentry family and practised the profession of a lawyer, distinguishing himself as an opposition reformer in the political struggles of Zemplén County. Having encountered the displeasure of the county dignitaries, he went to the diet of Pozsony, and, outwitting the censorship, edited a paper in manuscript entitled *Dietal Reports (Országgyűlési Tudóstársok)*. The paper soon became popular in the whole country, as it took the place of the non-existent free press. By fighting on the side of the most distinguished members of the opposition, Kossuth made himself into an outstanding

hourgeois reformer, and his reports contributed to the active engagement of public opinion behind the reform activities of the parliamentary opposition. The government made several attempts to silence Kossuth, but they were frustrated by the consistency of Kossuth and the opposition. At the instigation of the leaders of the opposition, Kossuth continued his activities after the closing of the session of the diet on 2 May 1836, and started a new manuscript paper under the title of *Municipal Reports (Törvényhatósági Tudósítások)*. It endeavoured to unite the activities of the progressive groups in the counties by bringing them information and coordinating their efforts. The paper, however, was short-lived, owing to the now successfully renewed intervention of the authorities.

During the parliamentary sessions, Vienna suddenly changed its attitude towards Hungary. The reasons for the change were the European revolutions and the growth of many progressive movements throughout the continent. The monarchs of the three great reactionary powers met in the autumn of 1833 at Münchengrätz and in Berlin to restore the prestige of the declining Holy Alliance, and decided to wage ruthless war against any progressive movement. Francis I died early in 1835, and was succeeded by his feeble-minded son Ferdinand V. The inner court clique (camarilla) ruled in his stead, headed by Metternich and the pro-Slav Count Kolowrat, who enjoyed the sympathy of the Austrian bourgeoisie. The new policy was not introduced until after the end of the diet. The loyalist chancellor Ádám Reviczky, who as a member of the lesser gentry had been moderate in his governing methods, was succeeded by Count Fidél Pálffy, who was destined to deal harshly with the progressive movements in Hungary.

The first blow was inflicted on the leader of the opposition, Baron Wesselényi. It was not only his activities in Hungary that were held against him. He had also organized opposition against the arbitrary Habsburg rule in Transylvania, and was the leader of the small, but always growing camp demanding social changes there. Political oppression and social backwardness were greater there than in Hungary. Since 1811, Vienna had not called any diets, and as the leader of the opposition, Wesselényi succeeded by constantly harassing the central power in getting a diet called in May 1834. The opposition insisted that the country's old grievances should be discussed, but the royal commissioner insisted that the royal proposals be given first priority. Wesselényi organized the opposition, and he set up a press to produce a lithoprint free dietal paper. The diet, however, was dissolved in February 1835, and punitive measures were applied to the

leaders of the opposition. Legal action was started against Wesselényi in Transylvania, and when, in order to avoid the consequences, he left for Hungary, he was summoned there. He was charged with treason and sedition on the grounds of an earlier speech made in favour of the peasantry, and early in 1839 he started a three-year term of imprisonment. It was later suspended, because in prison he very nearly lost his eyesight.

Simultaneously the government applied repressive measures against the younger radical group in the diet. During the diets a young audience in the visitors' section had exercised a strong influence on the course of the debates. On the advice of Kölcsey, Wesselényi and Ferenc Deák their prominent members formed a Debating Union and trained themselves in debating political questions, and drew up plans for democratic reforms. During the sessions the government did not dare move against them, but after the closing of the diet the leaders were arrested and charged with treason. The sentence came in March 1837; their leader, László Lovassy, was given ten years imprisonment in the dungeons, and others were sentenced to shorter terms of imprisonment.

Kossuth used his new paper to give scope to the protests of the counties and discuss the charges against Wesselényi and the young men; he thus developed the local protests against the government's arbitrary actions into a national movement. His paper was several times banned by order of the palatine, and Kossuth appealed to the counties for help; the counties stated that his paper was a form of private correspondence and extended their protection to him. The government was again finally compelled to use force. On 5 May 1837, Kossuth was arrested, charged with disloyalty and sedition. His case brought back memories of the illegal circumstances of the Jacobin trials. Sentence was passed in February 1839, and Kossuth was condemned to four years imprisonment, in addition to the time already spent in prison. Similar cases were opened against other leaders of the county opposition.

The severe measures of the government overreached themselves. Protest continued in the counties, and the county opposition gained in force. The bourgeois and independence movements became more powerful, and the influence of the radical intelligentsia became considerable in the increasingly important city of Pest. The policy of alliance adopted by the progressive landed nobility began to show results among the peasantry. In these circumstances, and as a result of the acute Balkan situation, Vienna came to the conclusion that it was necessary to abandon the use of force, and come to terms with the



nobility. Fidél Pálffy was dismissed and Count Antal Majláth elected chancellor, with other dismissals from important positions. This was the background to the new diet that opened its sessions in June 1839.

The government made different preparations for this diet. Instead of trying to defend itself against the reformers with the obsolete weapons of feudalism, it adapted itself to the requirements of the period and followed the tactic of supporting some fragments of the reform proposals. The new 'cautiously progressive' government programme was presented by a new party of young aristocrats who were called to life at the diet's sessions by Count Aurél Dessewffy. This time the opposition was also represented in the upper house of the diet by several aristocrats; they considered as their leader Count Lajos Batthyány, who was a supporter of capitalist agrarian development. The opposition started its attack in the first days after the opening: it refused to discuss the royal proposals before the government had remedied the constitutional infringements resulting from the illegal trials. The debates continued for ten months, ending finally with the victory of the opposition under Deák's leadership; and the prisoners were released. There was nothing to prevent the diet's decisions made in the meantime from becoming law. Voluntary redemption of feudal services was accepted without any significant opposition by the diet; so was the principle of the abolition of entailment, and the principle that those not of noble birth should be eligible to hold offices and property, the practical effectuation of the laws being put off till later. A modern law of exchange and finance and new laws concerning commerce, factories, limited companies and the economic rights of the Jews thoroughly breached the economic restrictions of the feudal system.

### Agriculture

The conditions for these results and for further development were brought about by far-reaching changes in the economy. In agriculture, during the long years of peace, the principles of the Austrian tariff policy remained unchanged, which meant that the main task for landowners was improving the quality, rather than the quantity, of their produce. This seemed the only chance for success for the Hungarian producer on the increasingly competitive international agrarian markets. Difficulties in selling their produce gradually brought home to the landowner class that there was a crisis involving their methods of cultivation and organization. There were more and more among

them who seemed ready to break away from traditional methods of production in order to master the crisis. To transform completely an estate based on labour services performed on demesne land into a capitalist agricultural unit was hardly possible on any estate in Hungary owing to the conditions restricting the accumulation of capital. The number of estates, however, where hired labour was employed side by side with statute labour increased considerably and there were even agricultural estates where less work was done by labour service than by hired labour. Modern production methods required the rounding-off and consolidation of domainial land, the separate enclosure of the landlord's land and that of the serf, the enclosure of common pastures, the return of rented tenures, the draining of waterlogged land and regular fertilization. Stock breeding became more important, together with the production of fodder and the stabling of animals. Qualified agricultural experts were offered good salaries and a share in the profits. Modern agricultural implements as used in Western countries were bought. On the estates working with these methods, yields were double the country's average, the quality of wheat improved, and so did that of cattle and wool. The highly developed estates established mills, distilleries, sugar and tobacco factories. Output from these industrial plants increased, especially that of tobacco. In these works mostly hired labour was employed. According to contemporary estimates the productivity of hired labour was about three times higher than that of labour service. Though the latter continued to be the prevailing form until 1848, the slowly increasing use of hired labour heralded the development of capitalist agriculture.

In the decades following the war period, peasant production also increased considerably. Peasant farmers increased the production of potatoes and sugar-beet to supply the distilleries and sugar factories of the large estates. Villages combined their efforts for the large-scale production of tobacco. The peasant's animal husbandry improved, and the output of traditional commodities such as wine, wheat and wool increased. Well-to-do farmers producing for the market also employed hired labour and manured their land regularly. The relatively freer sections of the peasantry, such as village officials partly exempted from labour dues and the peasants of privileged districts and market towns, were foremost in improving their production, especially where it was carried on on domainial land taken on lease, barren land or enclosed portions. These circumstances brought it home to the peasant that there was an intimate relationship between liberty and prosperity, yet the separation of the poor and well-to-do peasant increased social tensions.



## Industry

During the quarter century preceding the 1848 revolution, industry and trade in Hungary were influenced by the fact that after the wars and the industrial revolution, keen competition had forced the well-developed Austrian industry to remain within the confines of the Habsburg Empire, and, consequently, the Hungarian market became a question of life or death to it. To restrict the development of industry in Hungary became highly important for the Austrian bourgeoisie, and the government did its utmost to ensure that the more developed Austrian industries were able successfully to exploit the Hungarian market. In consequence of the competition from Austrian industry the crisis among the Hungarian handicraftsmen, who used obsolete methods and produced at high cost, became keener and the mass of artisans more impoverished. But the competition of the Austrian industry also ruined a number of the capitalist enterprises established during the war, and many textile mills especially went bankrupt. The decline of industry was followed in the thirties by some improvement, when the impetus of the Austrian industrial revolution swept over into Hungary too. New factories were founded and the old ones renewed their technical equipment. The textile mills were gradually mechanized; the flour industry also began to develop, and a number of sugar factories were established. In the forties development gathered speed. The Hungarian market widened its range and there was increased demand for Hungarian commodities in other provinces of the empire. The iron, machine, instrument and machine-repair industries developed considerably. The construction of railway lines, the growth of shipping on the Danube, and the establishment of shipyards and repair yards favourably influenced the development of the iron industry, leading to the establishment of many iron foundries and workshops for implements and tools. The tool industry developed in keeping with the demands of agriculture. Heavy industry began to produce more complicated machinery and implements. The development of the food industry was also considerable in the forties, though it ranked only second to iron among developing industries.

The in itself rapid development of Hungarian industry still lagged far behind the industry of the hereditary provinces: out of the aggregate number of capitalist enterprises in the empire only 10 per cent worked in Hungary in the forties and there were fifteen times more steam engines in Austria than in Hungary. Austrian capital had a large share in the establishment of capitalist enterprises, and some enterprises were established by big landowners. The bourgeoisie were greatly

interested in the foundation of limited companies; other enterprises were founded jointly by Hungarian and Austrian capitalists. The development of industry also contributed to a rise in the number of those employed in industry: in 1847, there were about 150,000 industrial workmen in Hungary. This led to a considerable rise in the town population, the increase being especially great in Pest, which was in the van of industrialization. The widening of markets also contributed to some individuals achieving a tremendous capital accumulation, but the larger part of this capital was ploughed back into commerce and the money market, and was not employed in industry. The credit law of 1840 increased the amount of credit available; savings banks were established, and by 1848 altogether 35 had been opened. In 1841, the Hungarian Commercial Bank of Pest was established, the first important credit bank in the country. These institutions were, however, only to a small extent able to satisfy the landowning classes' need of credit.

## The Crisis and Its Effect

Markets and credit were most easily available to the big landowners, and it was they who could go over to capitalist production first of all. And since political power was concentrated in their hands, every direct interest tied them to the feudal ownership of land and to the Habsburg dynasty. Very few of them went as far as to follow the teachings of Széchenyi and try to preserve the leadership of their class by promoting a moderate transformation. The high dignitaries of the Catholic Church were also the staunch supporters of the existing order and the Habsburgs. As big landowners and as ecclesiastical dignitaries they exercised their influence to preserve the status quo.

The landed nobility, on the other hand, had great difficulties both in selling their produce and in obtaining credit, and consequently fell deeper and deeper into debt. By personal experience they became convinced that it was impossible to go on as before. This section of the ruling class was inclined to take up the fight against feudal conditions, and for ending the country's state of dependence. But at the same time they belonged to the privileged classes, they were the exclusive owners of land, lords over the serfs and beneficiaries of their services, and their interest in keeping the dissatisfied peasants in check tied them to the government and the Habsburgs. In this situation, the various groups of the landed nobility took up opposing positions. Their majority rather favoured the existing feudal conditions, with possible modern-

ization by means of conservative reforms. There were others who would have liked to solve their troubles by recourse to capitalist methods of cultivation, and in order to achieve it, they were ready to change some of the fundamental institutions of feudalism, and loosen the constitutional ties with Vienna. As there was no strong bourgeoisie, these men became the protagonists of the ensuing struggles; prominent individuals adapted the ideology of the bourgeois transformation to the situation in Hungary, and were passionately eager to recruit more and more of the nobility among their numbers. A controversial development indeed: a change to bourgeois conditions under the leadership of the nobility! The landowning nobility could only devote itself to the task hesitatingly, often halting and producing half-measures. Their leaders badly needed auxiliary troops as well. They came forward from the intellectual elements of the nobility; this stratum was most interested in creating bourgeois conditions promising free opportunities for all, and hated the Habsburg power holding back national development. This stratum furnished the most energetic, radical section of the reform movement, and their role was of importance in every instance when a decisive battle was fought for reform either in the county or the diet sessions. The behaviour of the elements on the fringe of the nobility was less positive. Most of the individuals in this section were extremely poor, noble in status but living like peasants, mostly on tenures, and only differed from the peasantry in their privileges. Consequently, they could easily be mobilized against any attempt to curtail these privileges. Yet again, on other occasions, they could just as easily be mobilized under proper slogans for the cause of progress; their votes in the county sessions could easily be bought by the highest bidder.

The majority of the peasantry suffered equally from the boom and the post-war economic slump. Both factors contributed to the dwindling of the small portion of land owned by the peasant, and added new burdens to the existing ones. Within the peasantry, the number who held tenures decreased, as the number of the landless peasants increased proportionately; in the two decades following the 1828 census, the percentage of landless peasants rose from 56 to 60 per cent. On top of the landlord's dues, state and county taxes inflicted additional burdens on the peasantry, without mentioning the cost involved in the quartering of soldiers. Peasant society was divided into different strata. On top were the well-to-do farmers. These peasants had profited from the opportunities to market their produce and had increased their wealth, being able even to purchase land from the impoverished peasants. Such differentiation within the peasantry and the exploita-

tion of peasant by peasant prevailed especially in those regions where relations with the landlord were loose, or did not exist at all, i.e. in the free Cuman and heyduck districts, in the market towns, and in localities which had redeemed themselves. The primary difference between landowner and peasant nonetheless always proved stronger than that between different sections of the peasantry whenever there were anti-feudal demonstrations (and there were a good many in the thirties and forties). At the time of the enforcement of the urban laws of 1836, especially in connection with the enclosure of pastures and consolidation of land, demonstrations were the order of the day, the peasantry taking recourse to all the traditional forms of resistance, from sending petitions to refusing their services and actual resistance in defence of their land. The Lieutenantcy Council, whenever it suited the policy of the court, extended protection to the peasant against his landlord. It was a shrewd means of fostering in the heart of the peasantry the old legend about 'the good king', and reminding the nobility that understanding between the court and the peasantry was an unpleasant possibility. This threat significantly contributed to pushing the pro-bourgeois nobility into a policy of union of interests to extricate themselves from the bondage of feudalism and set foot on the road to national independence.

It is one of the anomalies of Hungarian social development that the change to bourgeois conditions depended little on the class which should have been responsible for the ideological transformation and for the practical realization of the actual development, that is to say, the bourgeoisie itself. It was the result of grave historical circumstances that when the time came for the actual change to bourgeois conditions, there was no bourgeois force capable of carrying out the task. The bourgeoisie of the royal towns in fact fought on the side of the court, defending feudalism against national independence as represented by the liberal nobility. In the thirties and early forties, the bourgeoisie gave only faint signs of its existence by demanding from the diets of the nobility the rights of which it had been defrauded. The progressive nobility was willing to return their political rights, provided the backward, mainly foreign, bourgeoisie of the royal towns extricated themselves from the influence of the anti-Hungarian court and made the internal organization of the cities more democratic. The rich citizens of the city corporations and the masters of the guilds were staunch defenders of feudalism and obstinately opposed the democratization of the city administration and attempts to loosen the rigid ties of the guild system. But the accumulation of capital in trade and commerce had called to life new elements in the cities whose interests

demanded the ending of feudal restrictions and economic dependence. Their number, however, was too small to exercise much influence. They preferred their interests to be represented by the pro-bourgeois nobility and were content to supply financial backing for the struggles.

Among the growing number of industrial workers, the small group of mainly foreign, skilled workers had no special grievances, and remained indifferent to any attempt to change the social system. In contrast, the great number of guild apprentices, and landless peasants working in the city as unskilled workers and labourers, suffered from misery and penury, overwork and exploitation, and though their political awareness was generally not developed enough to see the relationship between their own lot and the economic position of the country, they gave expression to their dissatisfaction in haphazard demonstrations. They later became more conscious, however, of the relationship between the backwardness and economic dependence of Hungary. Thus they were destined to become the plebeian basis of the fermenting revolution.

### National Culture

During the quarter century preceding the 1848 bourgeois revolution, the trend of economic, social and political conditions towards reform was favourably supported by successful aspirations towards the development of a national culture. Step by step the new generation turned its back on the traditional way of life of the nobility; it established a centre for its hitherto dispersed literary life in Pest, which had also become an economic centre, and prepared for the triumph of the progressive trend of Romanticism after the rule of Classicism. The new generation of writers initially saw only the troubles deriving from the dependent situation of the country, so that their poetry chiefly praised the exemplary aspects of the glorious events of the past, and tried to inspire a desire for liberty and national independence.

From the early thirties, however, the situation changed: the concepts of nation and progress received reciprocal meaning, and national and popular trends penetrated into literature, paving the way for the revolutionary populism of Sándor Petőfi and János Arany. New periodicals mushroomed, creating the professional writer, the new type of intellectual who could provide for his livelihood from his writings. Prominent literary figures began to enjoy nation-wide esteem, and a new reading public developed from the widening range of the progressive nobility and bourgeoisie. Pest began to flourish as a literary

centre. The prominent figures of literature served the bourgeois national aspirations not only in their writings, but also by direct participation in the political struggles of the day.

Side by side with the flourishing of national literature, there was a favourable upswing in other fields of cultural life. The establishment of the first permanent Hungarian theatre, later the National Theatre (1837), gave a tremendous stimulus to acting. The activity of Ferenc Erkel defines the flourishing period of Hungarian Romantic music, while public buildings in the Classical style bear witness to a new era in architecture; in painting, the pictures of Miklós Barabás inaugurate the beginnings of a national school. The influence of the reform movements encouraged the sciences also to begin their independent development, while under the auspices of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences organized research began in the fields of linguistics, ethnic studies and economics.

### The Next Phase of Reform

The development of the forces of production, the growing inner contradictions of society, and the gradual emergence of the national idea gave the supporters of reform the chance, after the diet of 1839–40, to open a new phase in the struggles for bourgeois reform and national autonomy. The autocratic government of the monarchy was shaken from within by the fermentation started by the industrial revolution, and its prestige in foreign affairs was also rapidly declining. At the last diet it had been obliged to retreat before the Hungarian movement and realign its tactics by introducing its own imposed mild reform policy. The opposition, on the other hand, was not to be frustrated by the government's suggestions. After its parliamentary victory, and a brief transitional setback, the reform movement spread all over the country, gaining ground even in the counties where previously there was a conservative majority. There was nobody, however, to coordinate these sporadic aspirations and organize them in the service of a definite political programme. This need was soon filled by Kossuth who, on 2 January 1841, started the *Pesti Hírlap* (Pest Journal).

Kossuth, released from prison as a martyr to liberty, was regarded by the government as a dangerous opponent. He was given the editorship of the paper with the idea that his activities could thus be supervised by means of the censorship. This was no more than wishful thinking. Kossuth, with masterly dexterity, evaded any politically delicate question: in his articles he deliberately avoided the problems

of the Austro-Hungarian relationship and of constitutional grievances, which might give food to the censor, but instead confined himself in his leading articles to clear-cut suggestions for bourgeois reform. After the plan of voluntary redemption of feudal services was agreed upon by the diet, he set to work to popularize the idea of mandatory redemption, and demanded that the urban bourgeoisie should be done away with at once, with state support and subsidies. Another way of alleviating the peasants' problems was suggested by the idea of general taxation. Kossuth devoted space in his paper to the demand that entailment should be ended and the question of parliamentary representation for the liberated serfs and the urban bourgeoisie, and took up any question, openly or in a disguised manner, relating to the idea of social transformation, as far as he could without the censor's intervention. Most of his demands tried to lessen the clash of interests between the nobility, the peasantry and the bourgeoisie. Out of the numerous problems with regard to national independence, *Pesti Hirlap* could dwell only on the questions of economic self-sufficiency in a more or less open form. Kossuth passed through several stages, from the insistence on a wholly free trade system through a common tariff structure to the idea of a protective tariff system promoting the development of an entirely independent industry. The struggle for independence in the economic field was supported by the establishment of several societies, such as the Industrial Union, the Protectionist Society and the Commercial Society.

The *Pesti Hirlap*, as the first modern political newspaper in Hungary, achieved unparalleled popularity within a short time. The opposition regarded it as its official organ. Kossuth's leading articles almost without exception provoked debates, replies and commentaries, which appeared both in *Pesti Hirlap* and as separate leaflets. They solicited comments as well in the columns of the conservative newspapers established under government auspices, such as the *Világ* (The World) and *Nemzeti Újság* (National Journal). The influence of these papers was, however, nowhere near that of the *Pesti Hirlap*. Kossuth had no trouble in rebutting the arguments of the conservative reactionaries or the resistance of the 'cautious progressives'. He was deeply hurt however, when Széchenyi, formerly a pioneer of progress, attacked him.

After the publication of *Stadium*, Széchenyi continued to serve the cause of the national revival with a whole series of practical schemes. His first achievements, the establishment of the Academy, the Casino, and horse-racing, were followed by others: navigation on the Danube, the Chain Bridge in Pest designed by an Englishman, William Tierney

Clark, and huilt by Adam Clark (no relation of the former), the regulation of the Lower Danube, the flour mill of Pest, the Hungarian theatre and improvements in viticulture and sericulture. His popularity reached its peak at the end of the thirties, in spite of the fact that the differences between his reform plans and the aims and political practice of the opposition were becoming more and more obvious. Right from the first, Széchenyi's reforms contained some fundamental weaknesses. He hoped to change the feudal relationship between landlord and peasant with measures from above, by gradual stages, leaving untouched the economic power and political leadership of the ruling classes, and true to his class situation and family traditions, wanted the reforms not to interfere with the relations between the Habsburgs and Hungary. After the apparent changes in the government's policy in 1840, Széchenyi believed that the government itself wished to be responsible for the moves for a transformation. The *Pesti Hirlap* and Kossuth's propaganda activities put the opposition movement far in advance of Széchenyi's schemes, and the elements associated with the *Pesti Hirlap* who were given decisive roles in the opposition movement were those Széchenyi would have preferred not to be involved in the leadership of change. He became more and more suspicious of Kossuth's activities, and more and more convinced that Kossuth and the *Pesti Hirlap* were generating public excitement which would compromise the peaceful work on the reform plans of the government and the nation. In June 1841, he published his pamphlet entitled *People of the East* (Kelet népe) attacking Kossuth in passionate terms. He reproached him for widening the gap in his articles between the court and the nation and heightening the existing differences between the social classes, so driving the country towards a clash with Vienna and an inevitable internal revolution. Kossuth refuted the charges in a moderate reply, and almost the whole camp of progressives sided with him. Public opinion rightly reminded Széchenyi that Kossuth was merely continuing the work started by him a decade earlier. This clash ended the collaboration of Széchenyi with the opposition movement led by Kossuth.

The propaganda of the *Pesti Hirlap* was already preparing for action in the next diet, which would be decisive from the point of view of reform. Kossuth's paper devoted much space to drafting various schemes, and also supplied public opinion with information concerning the state of political debate in the counties.

The question of taxation was the top priority for those preparing for the coming diet: in the proposals to the representatives, the opposition attempted to send the first salvo to shatter the crumbling edifice

of the nobility's privilege. The result proved how very weak the mass basis for the progressive movement was in the counties: the conservatives mobilized the masses of the poor nobility, who were frightened of losing their tax immunity. There were violent skirmishes between the two camps, and the motion for the introduction of a dwelling tax was outvoted in the majority of the counties.

#### The Diet of 1843-4. The Language Act

Such was the background to the diet that opened in May 1843. The government had also prepared its new tactics adequately: the royal agenda included some seemingly progressive motions. The numbers of the opposition were stronger than in the previous diet; unfortunately Ferenc Deák was not among them because he had declined his office owing to the degeneration of the political struggles in Zala County. It was a serious loss to the opposition.

The opposition vigorously opened its assault in the fields of bourgeois reform and national autonomy, and scored little success. Of the internal reforms, the principle of a general tax-paying liability was accepted, but measures to put it into practice were outvoted. The principle of the redemption of church tithes, the abolition of entailment, and compulsory redemption of services were also accepted, but again measures to put them into practice were referred to the next diet. Moral satisfaction alone was also afforded by a declaration that non-noble individuals could own land and hold public office, but no practical steps were taken to put this into effect before the revolution. The question of tariffs and customs was in the centre of the struggle for national autonomy. The demands of the progressive party were summarized by Kossuth in a memorandum on behalf of the Industrial Union, written in collaboration with the merchant corporations, individual industrialists and merchants. It was this memorandum which furnished grounds for the opposition to demand the introduction of a protective tariff system, that customs and tariffs should be the diet's responsibility, and that Hungary should have the right to make autonomous foreign trade agreements. These demands were accepted in spite of the compromise proposals of the moderates, but were rejected by the king. The refusal encouraged the opposition to start its protective tariff movement at the end of the diet, and to try to secure the protection of Hungarian industry by means of a social movement, in want of a protective tariff system. The motion for the effective an-

nexation of the Partium and the principle of union with Transylvania also failed to be accepted. In religious matters the results were more encouraging, and equal rights to Protestant denominations, the old demand of the liberals, were at last granted.

The language law was one of the outstanding achievements of this diet. After the gradual steps by previous diets, the language law made Hungarian the official language in almost every aspect of national life, making it the language of legislation, state administration, education and religion. By this law Hungarian was to assume its role as the strongest link in the concept of the united, bourgeois state. To this extent, the new law was the fulfilment of just and necessary demands, but at the same time by extending the use of Hungarian over the non-Hungarian territories too, it became the means for oppressing the non-Hungarian population of the country, contributing to further differences with the nationalities.

The commodity producing section of the nobility leading the Hungarian bourgeois transformation movement was conforming to the laws of social development by trying to produce the economic, political and linguistic unity of the bourgeois state. The process was strongly influenced by the fact that the country where the new state was to be created was multinational, and less than half of the total population was Hungarian. The Hungarian liberals intended to get over the difficulty by forcing the Hungarian language on all the other nationalities by administrative means, not taking into account the fact that the other nationalities of the country had also started on the way towards bourgeois national development, though somewhat behind the Hungarians. In the forties, matters reached a stage where some of the nationalities turned in open conflict against the Hungarian nationalists.

#### Nationality Movements in Hungary

The language and cultural movements of the other nationalities had started at the beginning of the century, first as an attempt to create a medium for literature. In the first quarter of the century, owing to the weakness of the bourgeois elements, and the pressure of absolutism, development mostly did not go beyond cultural matters. The intensity of the movement on the other hand kept increasing, and contacts were established between nationalities speaking the same language both inside and outside the country. Only in the thirties was the struggle for language extended to the political level, mainly encouraged by the energetic language propagation of the Hungarian liberal nobility.



The Croatian movement was the first to set itself fiercely against the endeavours to force Hungarian on them. The Croatian nobility and emerging bourgeoisie were mobilized by a cultural movement with political aspirations called to life by Ljudevit Gaj, and called 'Illyrianism'. Its aim was to create from the South Slav peoples a common Illyrian empire. The Illyrian movement had a tremendous influence on the development of Croatian culture and learning, but its leaders made a fatal mistake by appealing for support to the absolute powers of Vienna against the Hungarian movement. Within the Illyrian movement the influence of bourgeois elements became more and more pronounced.

The wave of Magyarization had not yet reached the Serbs, and the majority of the Serbian merchants approved of the Hungarian liberals, and supported their attack on the Austrian tariff system. The Rumanian movement hardly existed in the thirties, except for the semi-political petitions of Rumanian Orthodox bishops, which contained very few progressive elements indeed. A Rumanian political newspaper, however, the *Gazeta de Transilvania*, was started in 1838; it undertook the leadership of the national movement according to the aspirations of the Rumanian bourgeois intellectuals. The Slovak movement was even weaker, because there was hardly any nobility among the Slovaks and the Magyarization process appeared with the greatest force among them. The Slovak bourgeoisie too was powerless, and the Slovak national movement relied mainly on the Czech liberal bourgeoisie. The tendency, best seen in the activities of Ján Kollár and Pavel Jozef Šafárik, was characterized by the emphasis on the common interests of all Slavs, the deepening of linguistic and cultural relations, and a conscious awareness of the necessity of close alliance for the common cause. There was, too, a certain sympathy with the Russian people and admiration for the power of the czar. The intellectual leaders of the Czech and Slovak national movements looked hopefully toward Czarist Russia, which had defeated Napoleon and the Turkish Empire, the oppressor of the Slav peoples, failing to see its fundamentally reactionary nature. It was this which precipitated an ever-growing hysterical fear of Pan-Slavism in Hungarian public opinion.

The progressive Hungarian nobility assumed an entirely negative attitude towards the movements of the other nationalities. They claimed that the extension of civil liberties would solve the nationality question at once. Kossuth himself professed the same view in the columns of the *Pesti Hírlap*. Széchenyi raised his voice against this chauvinistic nationalism. In November 1842, he addressed the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, warning against the *Pesti Hírlap* circle

and condemning forceful Magyarization tendencies. He insisted that instead of empty jingoism material and intellectual superiority should be the force which through voluntary assimilation could gain new members for the Hungarian community. The nationalist public indignantly rejected Széchenyi's views, his former friends turned their backs on him, and the press reactions to his speech only added to his isolation. Yet Széchenyi was no less in favour of winning the other nationalities for the Hungarian community than the opposition, but he believed that it needed time, where the opposition imagined that it could be achieved in a day. In this phase of the struggle, the Austrian government took recourse to its later so useful formula of 'divide and rule', by supporting the weaker national movement against the stronger, and playing off one against the other.

In the forties the nationality movements became more and more hostile to Hungarian liberal aspirations. In Croatia this hostility led to open clashes: the Illyrian party, counting on the support of Vienna, after a number of bloody skirmishes ousted the pro-Hungarian group of gentry from the county and provincial assemblies, and made desperate efforts to secure independence for Croatia. The conservative, feudal Illyrian party had a small bourgeois opposition, whose demands went so far as to include agrarian reform, but without mass backing the demands could not be effective. The Serbian movement was greatly hampered by the fact that its national aspirations were tied up with the interests of the Orthodox Church, and the leadership of the movement drifted into the hands of the feudal church dignitaries.

With the language laws of the forties, the differences of the Serbian and Hungarian national movements became more pronounced. The influence of the neighbouring Serbian Principality and the idea of a South Slav empire added to the importance of the Serbian national movement, which was complemented, especially among young intellectuals, by bourgeois aspirations. The Slovak movement also revived. Its paper, the *Slovenske Národne Noviny*, was started in 1845. Led by Ľudovít Štúr, a progressive circle gathered around it, professing the aspirations of independent Slovak bourgeois development, in separation from the Czechs. In the peasant question they adopted the aims of the Hungarian liberals. Owing to the language situation, no approach was possible between the two movements, and Štúr and his associates continued to rely on Vienna. In Transylvania, the imposition of Hungarian as the official language met with the disapproval of the Saxon and Rumanian national movements, even turning the two movements against each other. In the early forties the Rumanian movement produced from within an opposition to the church leader-



ship, and a secular left-wing party gathered under Simion Bărnuțiu around the *Gazeta*. This party was more progressive than the conservatives under Bishop Lemény, but in keeping with the interests of its alliance with Vienna, it did not raise the peasant question. The Rumanian movement was also hampered by fear of Pan-Slavism, and of Russian power; this fear prevented serious deterioration in Rumanian-Hungarian relations. The Rumanian movement did not yet aspire to establish an independent state, fighting only for the political equality of the Rumanian people inside Transylvania.

The movement for the propagation of the Hungarian language and Magyarization was largely successful only among the urban German bourgeoisie and the Jewish population engaged in trade and commerce. The Magyarization tendencies, however, did not reach into the larger areas of the nationalities; only voluntary assimilation with the people exercising political power and leading the movement for bourgeois development caused certain changes. This, however, did not dampen the chauvinistic features of Hungarian nationalism and its responsibility for the deterioration in the relationship of the Hungarian and the other nationalities within the country. Even if the development of capitalist means of production and a desire for an independent national state inevitably led to differences between the Hungarian and non-Hungarian nationalities, it was not inevitable that these differences should develop into open hostilities when their common anti-feudal and anti-absolutist interests could have easily diminished those differences. Owing to these mistakes, the progressive Hungarian opposition movement passed into its decisive phase in the second half of the forties, encumbered with the burden of the nationality question.

### The Formation of a United Opposition Party

The moderate results of the 1843-4 diet encouraged the opposition to try to make use of other methods of mass propaganda beside the press to spread its ideas. Kossuth had anyway lost the editorship of *Pesti Hirlap* through government intrigue in the summer of 1844 and was confined to organizational activity only. Through the Industrial Union he could appeal to the bourgeoisie of Pest to convince them of the necessity of an independent Hungarian industrial development, and through the extensive network of the Protectionist Society throughout the country the teachings of the opposition began to influence the peasantry. The Protectionist Society, established to boost Hungarian industry, did not fill its mission as intended, but its role in shaping the

political opinions of the great masses was tremendously important. Kossuth was responsible for the establishment of two more societies, the Society for the Founding of Factories and the Commercial Society; the idea of the Fiume railway was vigorously propagated, to establish a direct approach to the sea, an important item in the economic development and autonomy of the country.

The government, seeing the strengthening of the opposition, prepared counter-measures. The supporters of the conservative sham reforms gathered; the passive Count Antal Majláth was replaced in the Chancery by the energetic, young loyalist Count György Apponyi. The government, on the plea of improving the county administration, sent administrators instead of the lord lieutenants into a good many counties with secret instructions to break the strength of the opposition with all the weapons at their disposal. At the same time, Széchenyi was instructed to take measures for the regulation of the Tisza river and articles appeared in government newspapers propagating the concept of a common Austro-Hungarian customs area, in the hope that the Hungarian landowners interested in agricultural exports would be won over.

Active preparations in both camps indicated that the decisive battle was near. The international situation sharpened the conflict. In the second half of the forties, bad harvests and economic crises contributed to the strengthening of progressive movements throughout Europe and by 1847 the situation was generally ripe for revolution. The signs of an imminent crisis were to increase in the provinces of the Habsburg Empire as well. The bourgeoisie were less and less inclined to put up with the restrictions feudalism presented to the development of industry, while the nobility was demanding more political rights and influence in governing bodies. In the provinces of the empire national independence movements flared up, the workers were organizing themselves, the intelligentsia were restlessly agitating against absolutism, and the peasantry was in ferment in every part of the empire because it was supposed to bear directly the burden caused by the crisis. The rising of the peasants of Galicia in February 1846 was a bloody warning to the ruling class of the empire.

The strengthening of the progressive movement and the development of ideological struggles went hand in hand even within the opposition itself with the emergence of both moderate and radical principles and factions. The left wing under Kossuth represented most distinctly the liberal reform policy: every question of the bourgeois reform was regularly propagated by them, from the general sharing of taxation and the compulsory redemption of services to the parliamentary

representation of the masses. They were not afraid of eventually mobilizing the masses if necessary, and their national struggle against a system based on the rule of administrators amounted to a demand for the establishment of an independent government. The more moderate branch of the opposition looked for guidance to Deák: in their demand they more or less agreed with Kossuth, but they were slower and more cautious in their methods, insisting on constitutional measures. The centralist group was another distinct branch of the opposition. Its members were the highly educated intellectuals: József Eötvös, László Szalay, Antal Csengery, Ágost Trefort and others, who were associated with the *Pesti Hírlap*, now no longer under Kossuth's management. (One of the first really competent bourgeois historians in Hungary, Szalay hoped to introduce in this country some of the methods and views of contemporary English historical writing.) Their ideal was a democratic state of bourgeois intellectuals. Their system was entirely utopian, without expressing the aspirations of any class. The main weakness of their concept was that they ignored the dependent state of the country, and wanted to introduce centralized government instead of the county system at a time when the counties were the bastions of liberty against a foreign government and the promoters of progress.

The differences of opinion between the various sections of the opposition camp hampered united action. During repeated conferences in the winter of 1845-6, Kossuth and his friends endeavoured to improve matters by uniting the various sections of the opposition both organizationally and ideologically. A central committee of the opposition was formed under the chairmanship of Lajos Batthyány. The centralists agreed to stop attacking the system of county administration, but Deák was against the publication of a united programme, afraid that by openly debating disputed questions the differences within the opposition would come to light. During 1846, however, certain events contributed towards the union of the opposition. The rising of the Polish nobility was stifled by the government by inciting the oppressed peasantry to rise against their masters. The news of what had happened contributed to the restlessness of the peasants in Hungary, too. As a result of the repeated bad harvests, for two years there was penury in the country. The shortage of wheat was made more serious by the speculation of both merchants and landowners. Many people starved to death, the public roads and the streets in the cities were full of paupers and the destitute, to whom official measures brought little help. The mass misery screwed up the political tension to the extreme. Both these events strongly affected the policy of the opposition. Kos-

suth made use of the example of the Polish government's joining forces with the peasants in Galicia to rally his countrymen with a graphic description of what could happen at any time in Hungary.

In the debates on what policy to adopt many radical views were voiced, including even the liberation of the serfs without any compensation. The emergence of radicalism encouraged the hesitant and moderate elements to take a more Kossuth-like view. The opposition conference held in June 1846 accepted most of Kossuth's proposals, but the drafting of an official programme was again adjourned.

The decisive push for the realization of a united opposition party came with the launching of the conservative party in November 1846. With the relative success of the government's policy in mind, the conservatives declared themselves an official party. Borrowing a number of the opposition demands, they professed themselves the supporters of a transformation launched and directed by the government. The basic requirements for any change were naturally missing from the programme, and from the obscure wording of the text it was obvious that its real intention was to maintain feudalism. Nevertheless, it could not be denied that it would attract the hesitating elements of the opposition. This danger persuaded Deák at last to agree to the opposition party's programme being drafted. After heated press debates and discussions the national conference of the opposition was convened on 15 March 1847 in Pest, with 1,200 participants. The conference discussed various proposals for inclusion in the programme, and on most items Kossuth's views were accepted. Finally, under the leadership of Kossuth and Deák, a committee of six was set up to draft a statement containing the opposition manifesto. The conference declared the opposition an official party. The Statement of the Opposition, a most important document of the bourgeois reform movement of Hungary, was discussed by the party conference in June, for tactical reasons under Deák's name, although it was Kossuth who was mainly responsible for it. Tactical considerations had, anyway, interfered too much with the Statement: compulsory redemption of services and general taxation were indeed included, but other important items of reform in Hungary were introduced only with the most obscure wording. The question of national independence, in contrast, was emphatically stressed, because on this the various factions of the opposition were fully agreed.

### The Plebeian, Democratic Left Wing

The programme nevertheless denoted a compromise with the non-militant elements. The circumstances which produced it clearly showed that the reform party of the nobility, struggling to solve its inner contradictions, was not fitted to represent consistently the interests of a change to bourgeois conditions. This deficiency was responsible for the formation of a radical left wing, which, at the beginning, wholeheartedly supported Kossuth's policy, but soon went beyond the ideology of the nobility's liberalism, to represent the principles of true democracy. They were ready to take a stand for the benefit of the people, to fight for a change with them, even at the risk of revolutionary violence. The protagonists of this democratic trend were young writers, meeting in the Café Pilvax, with Sándor Petőfi at their head.

The young writers of the eighteen-forties, such as Petőfi, Mór Jókai, János Arany, János Vajda, Mihály Tompa and Pál Vasvári, identified themselves completely with the cause of the people in their writings, and fought for them in the arena of daily politics. Petőfi, himself of plebeian descent, became their leader. Like his associates he became a revolutionary from the study of the French Revolution, and was not satisfied with the cautious objectives of the reform movement of the nobility. He hoped for the liberation of the people by revolutionary means, served this cause with his poetry, and worked for it by political agitation. The young history master, Vasvári, the son of a country parson, was a companion worthy of him, who collected the best elements of the university students of Pest in the Pilvax group. He also conveyed the teachings of radicalism to the petty bourgeois masses and a growing number of workers. The third great figure of the plebeian democratic movement, Mihály Táncsics, came from the peasantry. He had received many hard knocks during his life, and was fully familiar with the misery of the workers; in the political field, he was a most uncompromising fighter for the interests of the peasantry. In his books, which were printed abroad, he laid down a most radical programme of change, going far beyond the plans of the liberal reformers: his demands included the annulment of the nobility's privileges, and the abolition of serfdom without any compensation. His books were banned and Táncsics himself was thrown into prison and kept there until he was released by the revolutionary forces in March 1848.

### Government and Reform. The Last Diet of the Estates

In November 1847, the diet was convened by the government. There were disputes in the counties over the appointment of the representatives and the instructions to be given to them. The counties held by the opposition regarded the instructions of Pest County as a model to be followed. This—mainly Kossuth's work—contained far-reaching objectives for securing the independence of the country, and, in a somewhat milder form, the much discussed main demands of the change to bourgeois conditions—namely the final redemption of services, general taxation and the abolition of entailment. The position of the opposition was weakened because, owing to the activity of the administrators, the government party gained the upper hand in several counties which formerly belonged to opposition territory, and consequently many outstanding opposition representatives, such as Deák, Eötvös, Bezerédy, Klauzál, Beöthy and Pulszky, lost their seats. But Kossuth's presence was a tremendous asset. In spite of the extraordinary efforts made by the government party in Pest County, Kossuth and Móric Szentkirályi were successfully elected as the county's representatives on 18 October. Success was due to the fact that the opposition, for the first time in the political life of the country, had mobilized the non-noble intellectuals on Kossuth's side, and their votes had decided Kossuth's election at the county session. The opposition became stronger in the upper house of the diet as well; Lajos Batthyány, the leader of the aristocratic opposition, collaborated with notable men like Count László Teleki, Count Kázmér Batthyány, Baron Zsigmond Perényi, Count Gedeon Ráday and others.

The diet opened on 11 November, and in its early sessions the questions of national autonomy were discussed. As in the previous diet, the government took over a number of the opposition's demands, and the terms of the motion on the royal agenda sought to ensure its acceptance on the government's terms. The opposition, however, instead of accepting the motion, opened its attack. It demanded as the basis for further discussions an end to the illegal governing methods. The opposition had to fight hard for the acceptance of its demands in the lower house of the diet, and the upper house returned them several times, at which the lower house decided, at Kossuth's suggestion, to break with the old parliamentary procedure and send the king no answer on the royal agenda.

The first victory was followed by further success: the opposition won on the Croatian question, and in the matter concerning the an-

nexation of the Partium. Side by side with constitutional questions, the opposition continued its demands for bourgeois reform. In the debate on taxation, Kossuth declared that "the nobility could no longer entertain proprietary rights over the nation, yet it could be its leader"; for the price of resigning its immunity in taxation, it could "assume the rights of first among equals for its class"; in the matter of feudal redemption Kossuth stated his ideas about state subsidies for compulsory commutation. Both principles received a majority vote in a slightly modified version, so steering committees were appointed to deal with its provisions. The motion for the abolition of entailment and other motions met with a similar reception.

The first victories encouraged Kossuth to proceed to the subject of constitutional grievances, hoping that by tabling the motion on the administrator question, he could inflict a heavy blow on the government. In this question public opinion stood almost undivided behind the opposition, and Kossuth expected that this question would bring about the fall of Apponyi's system of government. But it soon became evident that since the opening of the diet the unity of the opposition had been greatly undermined by government propaganda. Part of the party had been ready to follow Kossuth only reluctantly, and with reservations. By the end of January 1848, Széchenyi's middle-of-the-road policy had gained ground to the extent that the unexpected happened: the lower house of the diet rejected by one vote Kossuth's motion, in favour of a compromise motion. The government's success did not prove lasting, as Kossuth and the leaders of the left-wing opposition won back part of the renegades in a few days and achieved so much that a motion was tabled again to deal with grievances over the administrators' activities. But the crisis was a good indication that the reform party itself was able to deal neither with the momentous task of social transformation nor with the struggle for national autonomy.

It became obvious that the majority of the nobility were averse to the more radical reform measures. Those who under Kossuth's leadership were ready to carry out far-reaching measures to effectuate the necessary changes could expect support from only two quarters: from the masses of the people, and from the European revolutionary movements, the first distant rumblings of which were audible even to the participants of the diet of Pozsony in February 1848. Kossuth, a politician of the nobility, and with him the left wing of his party, were ready to rely on these two forces to drag the reform movement out of its inertia and onto the road of advance.

### 3. THE BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION AND WAR OF INDEPENDENCE (1848-1849)

#### March 1848

The European revolutionary situation erupted first in France, early in 1848. The victory of the February revolution in Paris increased the tension in Vienna, while in Pozsony Kossuth, who eagerly awaited the news in order to link up the Hungarian reform movement with the success of the European movements, acted at once. Overcoming the resistance of Széchenyi and the hesitant elements in the reform party, he succeeded in getting the lower house of the diet to vote, on 3 March, for a motion on the address to the king. It demanded constitutional rule for the peoples of the empire, independent government for Hungary, and the instant acceptance of the bourgeois reform measures already accepted by the lower house of the diet. Most of the representatives, frightened of a revolution, became convinced that the measures were inevitable, and Kossuth himself endeavoured to establish the leadership of the nobility for the revolutionary changes in order to prevent a violent popular outbreak like that in Paris. The court ordered the upper house of the diet to prevent the forwarding of the address to the king, intending to dissolve the diet and place the country under martial law.

These were the antecedents to the popular uprising in Vienna on 13 March. Metternich escaped, and the helpless emperor was obliged to promise constitutional rule to the peoples of the empire. The revolution of the people of Vienna propelled forward the cause of change in Hungary. On the morning of 14 March, Kossuth appealed to the diet to be responsible for the course of the movement, and suggested that the address of 3 March be submitted to the king by means of a deputation. Pozsony at that time was loud with rumour about supposed peasant risings. The city itself was in a turmoil, particularly the young people, and in this atmosphere the diet was willing to agree to any of Kossuth's demands, including that handed over to the delegation to Vienna before its departure early on 15 March, which completed the address of 3 March by the addition of two items on general taxation and redemption of feudal services by the state.

While the parliamentary delegation was setting out for Vienna, momentous events were happening in Pest, the heart of the country. Here the young intellectuals had been in a state of turmoil ever since the news of the revolution in Paris. The Pilvax group was preparing for action and was finding a way to carry it out. Through the Opposition Circle Kossuth requested the public of Pest to collect signatures in support of the demands of the parliamentary opposition. Petőfi, Vasvári, József Irinyi, Jókai and Gyula Bulyovszky had prepared the circulars by 11 March, containing the 12 points of the radical young intellectuals, stipulating the liberty of the press, independent government, the annual convening of diets with full representation, equality in religion and before the law, general taxation, the abolition of feudal relations, the release of political prisoners, the establishment of national militia, union with Transylvania, and an army sworn to respect the constitution of Hungary. These were radical terms, far surpassing the aims of the reform policy of the nobility. The gentry leaders of the Opposition Circle were somewhat taken aback, and tried to persuade the youthful leaders to greater moderation.

The news of the Vienna revolution, however, decided the argument. In the early morning hours of 15 March, Petőfi and his companions read out the 12 points in the Pilvax, followed by Petőfi's recital of his poem 'National Song', written for the mass meeting to be held on 19 March, and the procession started off to mobilize the university students. From the university the ever-growing procession went to the Landerer printing press to occupy it, and by printing the song without the censor's permission, gave factual proof of the liberty of the press. From there they continued marching along the streets, urging the population, workers and bourgeois alike, to join in, along with the peasants who had just arrived for the national fair. In the early afternoon a meeting was held in front of the National Museum, in the presence of tens of thousands of people. There the delegation to take the 12 points before the city council was duly elected. Two members of the nobility opposition then in Pest, Gábor Klauzál and Pál Nyáry, became members of the delegation. From the Museum the crowd moved to the Town Hall. The demands of the revolution were handed over to the city council then in session; the demands were accepted without resistance. The members of the revolutionary committee were elected, including Petőfi, Vasvári, Dániel Irányi, József Irinyi, Klauzál and Nyáry, as well as seven members of the bourgeoisie and Lipót Rottenhiller, the deputy mayor and chairman of the committee. The radicals formed a minority in the committee, but they gained confidence from the fact that the people were on their side and followed them. From

the Town Hall, the procession, now twenty thousand strong, proceeded to Buda, to demand from the Lieutenancy Council the abolition of censorship, the release of Táncsics and the prohibition of military intervention. The Lieutenancy Council, which had just been considering the arrest of the young leaders and the military suppression of their movement, seeing the tremendous crowd, consented to the demands. Táncsics was carried over to Pest in a triumphal procession and the day ended in the National Theatre, celebrating with a gala performance the first day of the bourgeois revolution.

In Pest, on 15 March, the resistance of the ruling circles was broken by the people's revolution, enabling the liberal nobility in the succeeding weeks to bring about the transition to a bourgeois state, national independence, the reforms stipulated in their earlier plans, and a good deal more. The group of radicals and the people of Pest were not yet strong enough to assume the leadership of the revolutionary change. This had to be left in the hands of the liberal reform party of the nobility, yet it was strong enough to exercise decisive power in the vital stages of the revolution on the weak and compromising leadership.

#### **The First Independent Hungarian Government and the April Laws**

While the revolutionary committee in Pest was introducing its first measures for the realization of the aspirations of the revolution, thus encouraging the whole country to form their own revolutionary committees, Vienna was also the scene of decisive events. The people of Vienna received the delegation of the Hungarian diet with unprecedented enthusiasm. Kossuth, on the other hand, had great difficulties in dealing with the court. To be sure, the range of the demands had widened considerably: on board of the ship taking the delegation to Vienna, it was decided to demand that Lajos Batthyány should be prime minister of Hungary; further, that the bills submitted to the king should be approved immediately, and Archduke Stephen, who had succeeded his father as palatine in 1847, should be appointed as governor-general. The reactionary archdukes in the king's entourage opposed the acceptance of these demands, but the support of revolutionary Vienna and the arriving news of revolutionary movements in Hungary had their effect: on 17 March, the king consented to the demands, and appointed Batthyány as Hungary's first independent prime minister. With these historic achievements the delegation re-



turned on the same night to Pozsony and, on the balcony of the 'Zöld-fa' restaurant, Kossuth presented to a waving crowd of many thousands Hungary's first prime minister, Count Batthyány.

The following day, on 18 March, the diet began the first reading of the new bills. But first it issued a proclamation to the population, giving an account of what had happened, the outline of the ensuing changes, and stating that the Estates' diet would deal only with the most urgent issues, leaving the detailed provisions to be dealt with by the next diet, which would represent all sections of the population. Next it was proclaimed that all members of the diet, including the representatives of the towns and chapters, had equal personal votes. Earlier, already accepted proposals for general taxation and the abolition of the urbarial relations were drawn up in detail, and a new bill brought in on the abolition of tithes. On 19 March, the diet received the delegation of the youth of Pest, who handed over the 12 points and other demands. In his reply to the delegation Kossuth recognized the importance of the movement of the capital, yet stressed emphatically the precedence of the diet and its noble leadership. On the following days new bills were drafted one after the other concerning annual diets, credit banks, the liberty of the press, independent government, compensation to landowners and the abolition of entailment.

The work of the diet was interrupted at the end of March by the first attack of the reactionary forces.

Among the representatives of the ruling classes at that diet, the ecclesiastical and great secular landowners were hostile to the changes. Owing to the decline of the power of the Habsburgs, they dared not risk a frontal attack, and had given their reluctant agreement to the demands of the lower house of the diet. Széchenyi was a notable exception: he participated in the fight for the Vienna agreements, accepting and supporting wholeheartedly the changes, seeing in them the realization of his ideas much sooner than he had expected. By supporting Kossuth, he hoped to forestall the possible outbreak of a violent peasant rising. The liberal nobility was united in welcoming national independence, which attracted new recruits for Kossuth from the camp of the moderates. The complete and immediate abolition of manorial relations, however, was more difficult for the nobility to accept, and even those progressives who were fully conscious of the restrictive effect of feudal conditions might have held back but for their fear of peasant uprisings. Only Kossuth and the left wing of the reform party were pleased with the more radical realization of their former hopes. On the whole, the nobility approved of the general outlines of the changes, seeing in the liberated sections of society a further

pledge of lasting independence. There were many, however, who would gladly have restricted for their own ends the range of the liberation of the serfs. The court was counting on them and on the big landowners, when on 28 March it refused the royal signature to the bill liberating the serfs and the bill for the establishment of an independent government. In connection with the former they wished to maintain labour services until compensation had been voted by the diet; as to the latter, they wished to restrict the sphere of an independent Hungarian government and keep the country at least partially dependent. The diet immediately recognized the provocative nature of the two provisions, and rejected the amendments with disgust. It was again the people of Pest who rushed to the rescue of the diet: on 30 March, there was a sweeping demonstration against the attempted counter-revolution. A part of the demonstrators urged the necessity of an armed rising and the declaration of a republican state, calling upon other towns of the country and the people of the provinces to organize similar demonstrations. The appeal was not without effect. The court, its position very precarious owing to revolts flaring up in Italy and Germany, was compelled finally to accept both bills in their original text. The diet could go on with its work, the bill providing for a parliament with full representation being the most urgent among the remaining motions before it. Batthyány's cabinet was appointed on 7 April; on 11 April the Acts were passed by the diet and its sessions ceremoniously adjourned.

After a difficult beginning under the menace of its disruption, the last diet of the Estates thus ended with the passing of acts providing for the change-over to bourgeois conditions and for institutions providing for national independence. The European revolutionary movements had greatly contributed to this outcome, and even more the constant efforts of the revolutionary movement in Hungary. With the provisions of the acts about parliament, independent government, a national militia, the annexation of the Partium and union with Transylvania, the foundations of independence were laid, while the liberation of the serfs, the abolition of tithes, the proclamation of equality of tax, religion and before the law, popular representation in national, county and town sessions and the removal of censorship, guaranteed freedom of thought, speech and writing. This diet, however, was not without its legislative shortcomings in respect of both national independence and the establishment of bourgeois conditions: the liberation of the peasantry applied only to urbarial lands; a high property qualification excluded the poor from voting, starting a newspaper or entering the new militia; and the non-Hungarian nationalities could



only enjoy general bourgeois liberties, without their national demands being taken into account. Nevertheless, the people of Hungary had made the decisive step from feudalism to capitalism by securing the prerequisites of their national independence.

#### The Position of the Government. The Peasant Question

Peaceful development was threatened right from the early days of national independence by menaces from within and without. The court was preparing to counteract the concessions it had been obliged to make in a difficult moment, and it could safely rely on those elements who had always been hostile to the changes, mainly the aristocracy and the clergy. In this situation the independent Hungarian government would have acted correctly if it had widened the camp of its adherents by continuing to develop the achievements of the revolution, and, while taking active steps against its enemies, had formed alliances with the progressive movements of Europe. But Batthyány's cabinet was not able to cope with problems requiring so much courage and political acumen if only because of its social background. The members of the government besides Batthyány were Bertalan Szemere, minister of interior, Ferenc Deák, minister of justice, József Eötvös, minister of religion and public education, Gábor Klauzál, minister of agriculture, trade and commerce, Lázár Mészáros, minister of war, István Széchenyi, minister of labour and transport, Prince Pál Esterházy, liaison minister with the king, and Kossuth, minister of finance. It was thus more or less a coalition of wealthy, commodity-producing nobles and big landowners who approved or were reconciled to the changes. They may have approved or accepted what had happened, but their plan for the future was not to extend further the revolutionary changes, but rather to consider the revolution as completed. This, indeed, coincided with the interests of the classes they were representing; and then they imagined that by loyally adhering to the pact made with Vienna, they could prevent the court from changing its attitude to the new situation. It was only the left wing, Petöfi and his circle, the radical paper *Március Tizenötödike* (The Fifteenth of March) and *Munkások Újsága* (The Workers' Paper), edited by Táncsics, which warned of a possible counter-revolutionary menace, and ceaselessly urged the government to make armed preparations.

Apart from the question of principle, the government was hampered by practical considerations from showing strength in this complicated

situation. The treasury was almost empty when it was taken over, the army continued to be under Vienna's command, and the masses of the nobility were reluctant to make further sacrifices at a time when they were suffering from the loss of dues and statute labour. As a result the government faced a financial crisis. The majority of the workers, mostly guild apprentices, appealed to the authorities with strikes and petitions, demanding an improvement of their pay and working conditions and an end to the guild system. The government checked the trend by modifying guild regulations, and fixing their working hours, and in the same way strikes by miners in Upper Hungary were stopped by the promise of better living conditions for the miners. The two gravest problems before the government were still the peasant question and the nationality situation.

The gravity of the peasant problem was due to the fact that the peasants had not gained anything else besides their personal freedom. As only the urban lands were transferred to peasant ownership, only two-fifths of the peasants benefited, and only 20 per cent of the cultivated territory of the country was involved. Peasants living on domainial land and small-holdings, small vineyards and market-gardens were not relieved of their obligations, and the grievances of the peasants over enclosures were not remedied by the legislation either. The peasant masses were bitterly disappointed, and revenged themselves throughout the land by refusing forced labour services and the tithe on vineyards, by selling wine and meat without licence, and by occupying the landlord's grazing land. In other places the landless peasants divided up the land without consulting anybody. The nobility resisted and even contested the status of the urban land in order to deprive the peasant of his rightful ownership. In these questions the government acted as the defender of the interests of the nobility. It first tried to deal with the situation by peaceful measures, then by sending out royal commissioners and troops, and ended early in June by proclaiming martial law to repress the movement, referring the problem of the feudal survivals of the non-urban land to the next parliament.

#### The Nationalities

The other nationalities, excepting the Transylvanian Saxons, were mostly pleased with the achievements of the diet and with the new liberties of the bourgeoisie, and expressed satisfaction with the changes. Nevertheless, they stressed from the very first (the Slovaks in their petition of 28 March, Bănuțiu in his appeal of 25 March, the Serbs of

Pest and Újvidék in their statements) the special rights of the non-Hungarian nationalities, including their right to use their own language, and hinted at possible claims for autonomy. The diet and government of Hungary refused their requests point blank, because the ruling classes showed no inclination to resign their right to be sole rulers of the whole country and over all its people. This attitude paved the way for the representatives of the counter-revolution to try to win the other nationalities for their own ends. The national movements themselves, under the leadership of clerical, bourgeois and intellectual elements, were soon to receive strong and enthusiastic support from the peasants of the respective national minorities. In Hungary the shortcomings of the urban regulation discussed above furnished encouragement; while in Transylvania, where after a long period of chaos the 1846 diet had produced a worthless urban law, the long delay in the liberation of the serfs had the same effect, for the Transylvanian diet did not liberate the peasants until May. The unyielding attitude of the Hungarian ruling classes coincided with the issuing, on 25 April, of a new draft constitution by the court, promising equal rights to all the peoples of the Habsburg Monarchy. Consequently, the national movements of the non-Hungarians were ready to join forces with the court.

The situation was soon to deteriorate. The leaders of the Slovak movement, at their meeting at Liptószentmiklós on 10 May, issued a mass petition: it demanded that in addition to the parliament of Hungary, there should be separate national assemblies for each nationality, a separate Slovak militia, unrestricted freedom of assembly and of the press, the use of the Slovak language in county life, and the use of the Slovak national colours beside the Hungarian ones. At the instigation of the left wing, the petition was extended to include a demand for the release of cleared woodlands and tenures. The petition was stamped as seditious by the government of Hungary, and government commissioners were sent into the Slovak counties compelling the leaders of the movement, Hodža, Hurban and Štúr, to leave the country to escape persecution. The Serbian movement, with the support of the frontier districts, the Serbian Church, the Croatian movement and the neighbouring Serbian Principality, made energetic strides forward towards national independence, and, owing to traditionally good relations with the court, joined forces first with the counter-revolution. The conference of the Serbs met in Karlova on 13 May; it enjoyed the support of a comparatively developed Serbian bourgeoisie and peasantry, but was under the control of the Serbian clergy and frontier-guard officers. The establishment of a Serbian province was proposed,

consisting of the southern counties of Hungary with their mixed population, to be placed under the jurisdiction of the Emperor of Austria, and in alliance with the Kingdom of Croatia. In its programme, in which rightful demands were mixed with excessively nationalistic aspirations, the conference refused its allegiance to the government of Hungary. After the conference the Hungarian authorities in the counties inhabited by Serbs became powerless, as power more and more shifted into the hands of the local authorities, the *odvors*.

The attitude of the Slavic population of Hungary was to be seriously influenced by the Pan-Slav Congress, which opened in Prague on 2 June. At the meeting, convened by the Slavic peoples of the Habsburg Empire, the representatives of the Austro-Slav movement formed a majority against the anti-Habsburg left wing: they aimed at Slavic unity within the Habsburg Empire. The Slovak leaders at the conference accepted this guiding principle, and subsequently their movement sought separation from Hungary, and looked for support for their endeavours to Vienna. The Prague Congress had to break off its sessions, when on 12 June the people of Prague revolted against the imperial army, and Prince Windischgrätz used the defeat of the uprising to crush the left wing of the Slavic movement.

The Rumanian movement in Transylvania was much influenced by the fact that the court had broken its promise to convene a parliament to decide on the union with Transylvania and the extension of the March laws to that principality. The peasantry, restless about the delay of their liberation, came more and more under the influence of the Rumanian intellectuals agitating with patriotic slogans. At the conference of Balázsfalva on 15 May the pro-Hungarian movement of Bishop Lemény was driven into the background by Bărnău and the Rumanian clergy under Bishop Saguna and the democratic group of Avram Iancu. The decisions of the conference contained mostly bourgeois demands such as the abolition of statute labour services and dues, the abolition of the guild system, the freedom of the press and assembly, trial by jury, the rights of the Rumanian church, and a constituent assembly representing all the nationalities of Transylvania. The conference provided for the formation of the central organ of the movement, the Rumanian National Committee. Outside the official work of the conference there was violent agitation against the union, and in favour of alliance with the neighbouring Rumanian principalities. The peasants showed their impatience by refusing their statute labour and illegally occupying land. The counties sent out troops to deal with the peasant risings and the clashes only heightened the differences between the nationalities, especially after the govern-

ment of Transylvania had dissolved the Committee, and began to persecute the leaders of the movement. The Committee fled to Nagyszeben and continued its activity under the protection of the Saxons. As the Hungarian government continued to decline any move to discuss the rightful national demands of the Rumanians, the movement moved closer into the clutches of the court.

### The Organization of Defence

Thus the first independent Hungarian government had a great number of problems to struggle with from the first day of its existence. The classes it represented were satisfied with its achievements and wanted to see them safeguarded. Its policy seemed to be adequate in the first weeks, but later, when the signs of counter-revolutionary attack became evident, it was obvious that the measures taken were too ineffective even to safeguard its minimum achievements. For this reason the left wing, which had initially supported the government, assumed a critical attitude, and tried to compel the government to prepare for a coming onslaught. Within the government, it was Kossuth above all who supported the demands of the left wing. Kossuth himself would have liked to avoid an open clash with Vienna, but unlike his colleagues, he was not convinced that a loyal attitude alone was enough to prevent it. As minister of finance he made great efforts to procure funds for the organization of military defence, and, at the same time, he tried, beyond his own sphere, to prepare the country against any attack. With the support of the left wing he made provisions for military equipment to be produced at home, and the first Hungarian infantry units were organized. He had fierce debates with Vienna demanding that General Jelačić, appointed in March as *bán* (viceroy) of Croatia, should be removed. Jelačić, whose appointment was the first move in the camarilla's plans, had broken every connection with the Hungarian government. He wanted Croatia to break away from Hungary, and attach itself directly to the Habsburgs, and he began to prepare for a military attack on Hungary. At Kossuth's insistence the government persuaded the king to remove Jelačić, but he took no notice, and continued with his military preparations. At Kossuth's instigation, the government appointed a veteran of the opposition László Csányi of Zala County, as commissioner to organize the defence of the Drave river line, and brought the Transdanubian forces under his command. In a few weeks Csányi organized a considerable army from the military and national militia, and this, for the time

being, deterred Jelačić from launching an overt attack. Hostilities started however on another front: at the beginning of June, acting on Jelačić's advice, the Serbs broke out in an armed rising, and the Hungarian government, with its hurriedly mobilized army and national militia, could not localize the fighting.

On the home front momentous political events were also taking place. Against the wishes of the court, the diet of Transylvania met at the end of May and proclaimed union with Hungary and the validity of the revolutionary laws of Hungary in Transylvania. Early in June elections were held in Hungary for the first democratic parliament. Four hundred and twenty-six members were returned, mainly from the ranks of the old opposition and the liberal landed nobility. Not more than 30-40 of the new members belonged to the left wing. The left's electoral defeat was due chiefly to the fact that a high property qualification deprived the majority of the radical voters of their polling rights; a further reason was the inconsistency that the radicals had shown throughout on the peasant question, failing to insist that further steps be taken in the liberation of the serfs. At the beginning of the new parliament they tried to atone by insisting, at the instigation of Táncsics, that the tithe on vineyards be abolished and the serfs working on demesne land also be liberated.

Parliament opened on 5 July, and from the very beginning its debates centred around the defence question. On 11 July, parliament unanimously voted 200,000 soldiers and 42 million forints as demanded by Kossuth, proving that in the defence of national independence they were above bargaining. The ensuing debates, however, also proved that the majority did not recognize that the real enemy was the court, and that in spite of the violent struggles in the south and the behaviour of Jelačić, they had not seen the truth. The court asked parliament for 40,000 recruits against the Italian revolutionaries. The government, on the grounds of the Pragmatic Sanction, wanted to vote the recruits; even Kossuth consented, only demanding that before this was done Vienna should restrain Jelačić and that the recruits should not be sent to Italy. Parliament voted the required recruits on this understanding. Only the radicals fought desperately against the motion, rightly recognizing that in the new climate of international relations, Hungarian foreign policy should be based on solidarity with revolutionary movements. Batthyány in his foreign policy, on the other hand, strove to solidify the achievements of the revolution by securing the recognition of the Western powers, first of all that of England, and for that reason in particular he rejected radicalism in any shape or form. A policy of this kind, however, was entirely futile: England, as before, rejected

any approach from the revolutionary Hungarian government. Attempts to secure diplomatic ties with France met with similar failure. It was only with the German unification movement, developing after the March revolution in Germany, that the Batthyány government could temporarily enter into diplomatic relations. As early as May, representatives were sent to the parliament of Frankfurt, then engaged in drafting the constitution of the united Germany, and, at the end of August, László Szalay was recognized as Hungary's official representative; some time later, the recognition was suspended due to Austrian intervention.

The August debates of parliament were characterized by the hope that if Austria became part of the united Germany, all that would remain of the relationship of Austria and Hungary would be a common ruler. The questions pertaining to the defence forces to be set up were therefore postponed, although circumstances urged quick action. But it was eventually no longer possible to postpone a decision: should the new recruits join the imperial forces or the independent, Hungarian army? After long delays and heated arguments, in the course of which Kossuth fought side by side with the left wing for the establishment of an independent, Hungarian army, at last a decision was reached: it was agreed that the new recruits should only fill gaps in the existing imperial regiments, and the others should be used for the establishment of new Hungarian battalions. The motion was voted for only by the governing party, with the radicals and their supporters, 117 members in all, voting against it and for an entirely independent Hungarian army. There was a considerable shift to the left in the ranks of the liberal majority, which increased when at the end of August and beginning of September it became clear that an attack was inevitable.

### **Failure of the Policy of Appeasement**

After the extensive revolutionary turmoil in the first half of 1848, conditions in Europe had again consolidated. In the West, an economic boom was on the way. Chartism in England and the proletarian rising in Paris had failed bloodily, and the bourgeois revolutions in the West, including Vienna, were forced to compromise. The Austrian armies were victorious against the revolutionary forces both in Prague and Italy. As a result, the court believed that the time had come to oppose openly the Hungarian revolution. At the end of August, Jelačić received new encouragement, and hurried up his preparations. His opposite number, General Ottinger, commanding the

Transdanubian forces, went over to the enemy. General Bechtold, who had fought half-heartedly and ineffectively against the Serbs in the southern part of the country, resigned. The Hungarian government knew about the preparations of the court, yet it was only Kossuth who prepared for war; the majority of the government looked for means of peaceful settlement. Batthyány and Deák went to Vienna on 29 August, and were prepared to make concessions even at the expense of independence to avert war. But the prime minister of Hungary was refused an audience, and instead a royal ordinance was sent to Palatine Stephen on the 31st. This, and the enclosed memorandum of the Austrian cabinet, accused the Hungarian government of infringing the Pragmatic Sanction by its financial and military measures. They were instructed to modify the April laws and stop military preparations against Jelačić. The provocative nature of these instructions was obvious; should they be refused, Hungary could be made responsible for future events.

Owing to delay on the part of the palatine, the royal ordinance did not reach the council of ministers until 4 September. The court's intentions were obvious to all members of the government and parliament alike, but instead of terrifying them into cancelling the achievements of the revolution, the reaction was just the opposite. Kossuth described to parliament in dramatic words the failure of the policy of appeasement, and demanded special measures to deal with the precarious situation. The members voted almost unanimously for measures to provide for national defence: conscription, the recruiting of extra troops and the dispatch of government commissioners, and voted the funds to pay for the preparations. In order to expose the aims of the reactionaries, Kossuth thought it best to comply with one item of the royal ordinance, i.e. that the government of Hungary should send a committee to Vienna to discuss various disputed questions. At his suggestion, a parliamentary committee numbering a hundred members was sent out, but they were not invited to discussions. At that point it was clear that agreement could only be reached by giving up entirely any vestige of independence. The policy of preserving peace at any price had completely failed, and it became evident that the achievements of March could only be defended by the measures of Kossuth and the left wing. The return of the committee on 10 September was followed by the cabinet's recognition of the failure of its policy, and their resignation, except for Szemere and Mészáros. The following day, the palatine tried to assume power in parliament, but the house protested, demanding that until a new government was formed, the ministers should go on as before. Batthyány was not willing, whereupon

Kossuth, in the midst of feverish applause from the gallery and the people outside, alone among the ministers, resumed his seat. He was welcomed by most of the members, and Kossuth made use of this solemn moment by rising and demanding that the house give its approbation to conscription and to the new bank-notes, although according to the law these should have first been sanctioned by the king. The majority's shift to the left continued, the majority of the members no longer demanding the ritual of legality.

### Jelačić's Attack and Defeat

After this fateful session, Batthyány was again designated by the palatine to form a government. While Batthyány was engaged in trying to form a right-wing cabinet excluding Kossuth, events succeeded each other with dramatic speed. On 12 September, a desperate report from Csányi, the government commissioner, arrived in the capital: Jelačić and his army had crossed the Drave the previous day, and as the new commander, Ádám Teleki, was not engaging him in action, his way was open to Székesfehérvár. Batthyány ordered a general levy of the masses, but it was very questionable whether the peasants, who had so many accounts unsettled with their former masters, would feel inclined to fight side by side with the nobility against the intruders. As an incentive the house voted the abolition of vineyard dues on 15 September, and simultaneously decreed the compensation of landowners with state bonds. Kossuth put it shrewdly when he said that the latter was to give the gentry, also, an inclination to defend the fatherland. The house proceeded to discuss another bill to relieve the peasants of a series of non-urban obligations.

The Transdanubian peasantry attacked the scattered troops of Jelačić, destroying the stragglers and capturing the carts carrying supplies. Within a short time the invaders were cut off entirely from Croatia. The peasants acted then, and later on, too, as the defenders of national independence, seeing more hope for the realization of their demands in an independent country than under foreign rule. The threat from abroad contributed to the formation of a united front, combining the adherents of the revolution from the liberal landed gentry to the radicals, from the petty-bourgeois and plebeian masses to the peasantry, and from Kossuth and the Madarász brothers to Petőfi and Táncsics.

Another important event happened at the parliament session of 15 September: at Kossuth's suggestion a committee was appointed to

advise Batthyány in the organization of defence. The committee, containing mainly radical members, formed the nucleus of the later Defence Commission which organized the whole structure of the War of Independence. During the succeeding days the situation deteriorated further: the palatine, who was ready to assume the military leadership, had volunteered a meeting with Jelačić, but fled to Vienna after its failure; Vienna, on the other hand, deliberately hesitated to recognize Batthyány's very moderate government; from Transylvania new hostilities were reported; and Jelačić was advancing on Székesfehérvár. Growing danger multiplied determination to meet it: the government commissioners continued their recruiting efforts, and more and more troops filled the camp of the defence, with the people of the capital making feverish preparations. Kossuth went in person to recruit volunteers in the Great Plain. His enthusiastic speeches moved many thousands to meet the enemy.

Kossuth, however, had to interrupt his journey. He was recalled because a royal decree of 25 September appointed Count Franz Lamberg, a general, as the commander-in-chief of all forces in Hungary and the Lord Chief Justice, Count György Majláth, as viceroy. Parliament declared the decree illegal and void because it had come out without the counter-signature of the prime minister, and would have constituted the end of Hungarian independence. The arrival of Lamberg on 28 September to take over the high command in Pest caused an uprising among the excited masses which led to his death. The following day, on 29 September, the new commander-in-chief, General Móga, at the express command of parliament engaged in combat the forces of Jelačić on the shore of Lake Velence. The people's army of the War of Independence, made up of new recruits, the national militia, volunteers and regular troops, inflicted a heavy defeat on the enemy's superior forces at Pákozd. The following day, Jelačić, breaking the terms of the armistice, fled to Vienna; the rear of his army was captured at Székesfehérvár, and his reserve forces at Ozora a few days later. Mór Perczel's army corps cleared the whole of Transdanubia of the enemy within a few weeks.

The new front of national unity won because all classes and strata engaged in it were equally interested in its success, regarding the return of absolutism as harmful, although not in an equal measure. The victory denoted the climax in the shift to the left of the forces engaged. A new balance resulted in the redistribution of power between the various factions. The government formed in April and the supremacy of the liberal, landed nobility were entirely upset by the September crisis. After the Lamberg affair Batthyány resigned, Széchenyi retired



to a mental home with a complete breakdown, early in the month, Esterházy sided openly with the court, Klauzál withdrew, Eötvös went abroad and Deák continued to serve as a member of parliament only for a short time—of the former ministers only Kossuth, Szemere and Mészáros remained on the scene.

### The Defence Commission

After Batthyány's resignation, parliament now formally entrusted the Defence Commission with power; as, however, four of its six members, László Madarász, Pál Nyáry, József Patay and Imre Zsembery, belonged to the left wing, Mészáros and Szemere from the right and four liberal members of the upper house were added to their number. Nevertheless, the left wing had the upper hand in the Commission, mainly owing to the influence of its chairman, Kossuth, who worked hand in glove with the left, and the situation did not change while the immediate danger lasted. The danger in fact became more and more acute. After Lamberg's death, the imperial court issued decrees for the dissolution of parliament and declared the laws passed by it void. Jelačić was vested with full power and the country brought under martial law. On 8 October, parliament declared the court decrees void, and the Defence Commission was vested with full power to organize the defence of the country.

The forces of the counter-revolution were attacking in several places along the frontier of the country, but were assuming the defensive on the main battlefield. Jelačić's army withdrew towards Vienna, and as Móga's Hungarian forces delayed their pursuit, succeeded in crossing the frontier and joining Windischgraetz's army. The Hungarian army stopped on the frontier, though it had a historic chance to expand the revolution to European dimensions. On 6 October, the people of Vienna rose again, preventing reinforcements being sent to Jelačić, and after hanging the reactionary minister of war, Latour, on a lamp post, occupied the city. The imperial court fled to Olmütz; and it took Windischgraetz a long time to organize his forces against the revolutionaries. The road to Vienna was open to the Hungarian army. Both common sense and solidarity with the Austrian revolutionaries dictated immediate attack, but the army command dared not cross the frontier without instructions from Pest. Both the Defence Commission and Kossuth were undecided, and sent uncertain, contradictory instruction, so that by the time Kossuth made a decision, going himself to the camp, it was too late to attack. It was on the same day that

Windischgraetz defeated the Viennese that the Hungarian army set out, and Windischgraetz repulsed them at Schwechat, outside Vienna, on 30 October. It could have been a fatal defeat for the Hungarians, but with revolutionary Vienna at his back, Windischgraetz dared not pursue the retreating Hungarian army. At the headquarters in Pozsony, Kossuth relieved the incompetent Móga, and appointed Arthur Görgey as commander-in-chief in his stead, as he had shown more spirit during the attack.

It took Windischgraetz a month and a half to restore order in Vienna, and prepare for an attack against Hungary. The Defence Commission lost no time in preparing for defensive warfare. A new army was equipped practically out of nothing; by the middle of December, 64 infantry battalions, 10 hussar regiments and 32 artillery units had been set up, including roughly 100,000 men and 233 cannons. Weapons and munitions production began, and industry was mobilized entirely for war equipment. The expenses were covered by issuing unsecured notes, without a large devaluation of the currency. Kossuth took over the lion's share of the work of the Commission, working day and night to carry out his responsibilities. He was deservedly called a revolutionary character by Marx and Engels, taking on his shoulders the life and death struggle of his people, a Danton and Carnot in one for his own nation. But other members of the Commission, such as Madarász, Szemere, Nyáry and others, also had their share in the work. The members of the literary world had a large share, too, in mobilizing society. Petőfi, Arany, Mihály Vörösmarty and Gergely Czuczor wrote revolutionary poems, others served the revolutionary cause as newspaper editors and journalists; Táncsics's paper, the *Munkások Újsága*, contributed to raising the readiness of the peasantry for war.

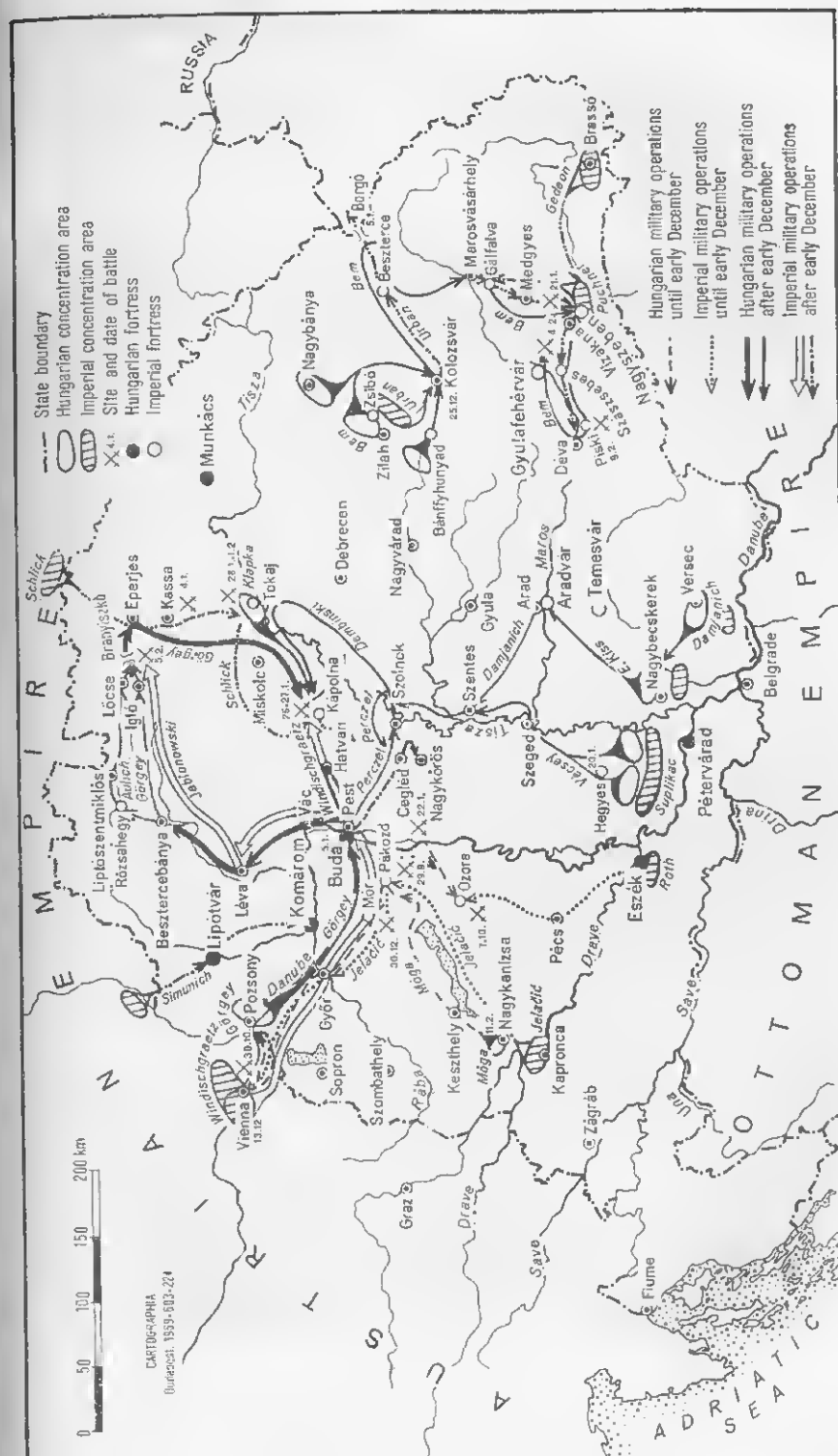
In the apparently united front of the defence, however, gaps and cracks were appearing. There were many in parliament who feared the courageous policy of the Commission, and would have liked to leave the door open for negotiations. This group, the nucleus of the later peace party, first came forward when the camarilla in Vienna forced the abdication of Ferdinand V, who had made a vow to keep the constitution, and raised his nephew, Francis Joseph, to the throne on 2 December. Parliament declared this step illegal, and labelled Francis Joseph a usurper. In the meetings prior to this, however, Dénes Pázmándy had tried to win over the majority, in the name of the peace party, to recognize Francis Joseph. The peasantry also came forward with repeated demands, but the government stifled their movements with too much energy, stating that claims could only be considered



after the war. As a result the peasantry became indifferent to the cause of defence, and the united front was considerably weakened. But at this time the greatest danger came from the behaviour of the nationalities. On the southern front, the war against the other nationalities continued with varied success but in ever greater dimensions; Transylvania was occupied by imperial forces with the support of Rumanian insurgents, and only the Slovaks remained not entirely won over to the counter-revolution.

### The Imperial Forces Attack

Battles in the Serbian, Rumanian and Slovak territories formed organic parts of a united strategy which tried to break the resistance of Hungary by centralized attack from nine different directions. About the middle of December the main offensive of the imperial forces started from the west. Both the Defence Commission and public opinion at large were badly disappointed from the very start. Görgey, who enjoyed full responsibility owing to Kossuth's confidence, did not engage the enemy: the army of the Upper Danube, which had been equipped during the past six weeks with unsparing sacrifice by the government, began to retreat without seeking engagement. Görgey was the undoubted representative of the class of landed nobility which deliberated most anxiously as to the possible outcome of the war, and not the revolutionary commander that Kossuth had taken him to be. While organizing the army he endeavoured to keep any manifestation of the revolutionary spirit away from the units, and when the offensive began, he retreated so quickly, in spite of Kossuth's orders and Government Commissioner Csányi's entreaties, that within a fortnight the imperial army was before Pest. On the last day of the year parliament decided in a dramatic session that it would not give up, but would transfer the seat of the government to Debrecen. This decision was made possible by the fact that the newly elected commander of the Hungarian forces in Transylvania, General Józef Bem, the hero of the Polish war of independence, had just liberated most of Transylvania from the imperial forces. The people of Pest received the decision with fierce demonstrations, demanding the punishment of the traitors. At the request of the moderate elements a peace delegation in the persons of Deák and Batthyány was despatched to the headquarters of Windischgrätz, but they were not received by the haughty commander, who instead ordered the arrest of Batthyány. The evacuation of Pest started on New Year's Eve and was completed within three days.



The War of Independence, I.

On 4 January, Görgey also moved out of Pest, in the direction of Vác, to proceed further towards the northern mountains. On the 5th, at Vác, he issued a declaration which in fact offered terms to the enemy, thus openly breaking allegiance with the Defence Commission. The defence of Debrecen fell to Perczel's army corps, stationed alongside the Tisza river.

The situation of cabinet and parliament was equally desperate in Debrecen, and the collapse of the War of Independence was only averted by Windischgraetz, who, flushed with victory, believed that the war had been decided, and did not want to expose his troops to the vicissitudes of further advance in the Great Plain before the spring. Kossuth and his associates thus gained two months, and made good use of the delay. The real greatness of Kossuth, the patriotic fervour of the left wing and the patriotism of the people of the Great Plain was shown to advantage in those weeks of hardship. The Commission established new bases to supply war equipment in the Great Plain and surrounding country, and filled the units with new recruits and volunteers, organizing new infantry and hussar regiments and artillery units, commissioning irregular troops and supplying the material resources.

The military situation justified optimism in some measure: the victories of Bem had made the situation in Transylvania secure, the forces of Klapka had stopped and repelled Sebick's army corps breaking into the Miskolc area from the north-east, while Perczel stopped the advance of the enemy towards Szolnok with successful counter-attacks. Early in February, Görgey also turned up in the Szepes region after his dubious activities, and won a marked success at Branyiszko. The most risky step was taken by calling back the experienced southern army under the joint command of General Damjanich and General Vécsey. The line of the Maros river thus remained defenceless against the Serbs, yet the small rearguard, with the help of the Hungarian inhabitants, was able to put up successful resistance. By the middle of February, the new concentration had been achieved, and in the middle region of the Tisza a 50,000-man army was ready to attack. The question of general command was solved by Kossuth, who deposed all the mutually jealous army commandants, and picked the general of the Polish war of independence of 1831, a member of the emigré Polish high command in Paris, General Dembinski, to become commander-in-chief. Yet the choice did not prove a lucky one. While preparing for action Dembinski was not able to come to grips with the difficulties that a foreign land and circumstances presented, and at the end of February was compelled to retreat against the surprise attack of the imperial forces at Kápolna. The generals, offended because of

the appointment of a foreign commander-in-chief, were equally responsible for the failure, especially Görgey, who after the battle persuaded the division commanders to refuse to obey Dembinski. In this critical situation Kossuth yielded and appointed General Antal Vetter to relieve Dembinski. Görgey was not satisfied with the solution, and owing to a tactical mistake that Vetter made after the victory of Damjanich on 5 March at Szolnok, he began to intrigue against him, until Vetter, on the plea of illness, retired. Kossuth was obliged on 30 March to appoint Görgey acting commander-in-chief and head of the main army, ready to launch a new attack.

### *The Spring Campaign*

By the end of March the military conditions of a successful counter-attack seemed to have been achieved, especially after Bem had cleared the whole of Transylvania of the enemy, and Perczel began operations with a newly organized army corps on the southern front with promising results. On the home front the situation was less reassuring. The peasantry had noticeably withdrawn their support because their rightful demands had remained unanswered. During the enemy's winter campaign it was not possible to arouse great masses to join the army, as in September: both the number of recruits and volunteers had diminished, and recourse had to be made to conscription. Kossuth and the Commission continued to stick to the well-established policy of the united front, expecting the continued support of the landed nobility for the War of Independence if the March laws were rigorously adhered to, and the peasants' demands for further legislation consistently refused. This policy undoubtedly overreached itself, because the peasants were dissatisfied; nor were the hesitant elements of the nobility happy either. Among the members of parliament the peace party made great gains: its leaders openly declared themselves adherents of a policy of compromise, ready to negotiate at any moment if Vienna gave up its demand for unconditional surrender. The left wing declared war against the peace party, but with little success. The lack of the enthusiastic support of the revolutionary masses of Pest was also acutely felt.

On 4 March, Francis Joseph dissolved the Austrian constituent assembly and submitted a constitution which made Hungary an integral part of the empire, and which organized separate provinces subject to the empire out of Croatia, the southern territories and Transylvania. This development, and the misfiring of the army's first

operations, encouraged the peace party in its endeavours to start negotiations with Vienna, and so, for the sake of the interests of the landed nobility, hamper the further development of the revolution. Their first objective was to undo the existing alliance between Kossuth and the left wing. They attacked the most left-wing member of the Defence Commission, László Madarász, Kossuth's staunchest collaborator, with false charges. The left wing counter-attacked: on 24 March, an appeal reached Kossuth to dissolve parliament and seize power himself. Bem was to be appointed commander-in-chief, and Görgey, the hope of the peace party, court-martialled. But Kossuth, not daring to take the risk, left Madarász in the lurch, and went himself to join the army, hoping that his presence would contribute to the success of the great event in store.

Following a plan conceived on 30 March, one corps of the Hungarian army concentrated around Eger began to move forward along the Gyöngyös-Pest road, three divisions prepared to encircle the enemy along the line Jászberény-Isaszeg, and afterwards join forces at a point around Gödöllő to annihilate the army of Windischgraetz. On 2 April, Gáspár's army corps on the right wing defeated the Austrian forces with the help of Damjanich at Hatvan; the main forces, on the other hand, engaged Jelačić's corps at Tápióbicske on 4 April, and after varied success, managed to force a victory. This victory, however, revealed to Windischgraetz the disposition of the Hungarian forces and enabled him to reorganize his troops to prevent encirclement. Thus, in spite of the brilliant victory of the Hungarian forces at Isaszeg on 6 April, the annihilation of the enemy did not take place mainly due to mistakes made by the high command, and Windischgraetz succeeded in pulling back his forces on the open Gödöllő road towards Pest. Görgey did not attempt to smash the enemy completely, but rather to achieve tactical victories in order to force Vienna to come to terms. At that time Görgey was not yet in direct touch with the peace party, but the similarity between their attitudes and aims made it possible for them to synchronize their actions.

### The Independence Manifesto

After the first victories of the Hungarian army, Kossuth believed that the time had come to stop the peace party from trying to come to terms with Vienna. He wanted parliament to announce that Hungary had broken away from the House of Habsburg, and planned to form a new independent government, dissolve parliament and by new

elections bring about a new parliament with a substantial majority who supported the policy of independence. From the army headquarters at Gödöllő, he hurried back to Debrecen, but could only partially carry out his plans. In spite of the open and later concealed opposition of the peace party, under the pressure of the demonstrating masses he was able on 14 April to persuade parliament to declare the Habsburgs deposed from the Hungarian throne. His other plans, however, remained unrealized in the form he wished. The historic act of the Habsburgs' dethronement, and the subsequent Independence Manifesto, enumerating the centuries-old offences of the dynasty, was well received by most of the public, yet under the influence of Görgey few officers of the army approved, and the bourgeois powers of Europe were certainly even more deterred from supporting revolutionary Hungary. László Teleki in Paris and Ferenc Pulszky in London tried in vain to arrange the recognition of an independent Hungary, because the interests of the great powers demanded the maintenance of Austria and the end of the revolutionary movements. It was the same in Italy, with the great powers watching peacefully while Austrian arms extinguished the smouldering embers of the revolution. England regarded a strong Austria as indispensable to the balance of power in Europe, and so opposed Hungary's efforts to break away from Austria. By that time Hungary was fighting alone and the sympathy of the other revolutionary movements was represented only by a few thousand Poles, a few hundred German and Italian volunteers, and a few Englishmen (such as General Richard Guyon), of more moral than effective significance.

Kossuth, as governor of an independent Hungary, desired to form a non-party government; setting aside the participants of the political struggles of Debrecen, he appointed as minister of finance Ferenc Duschek, who was regarded as an expert, but in point of fact was a mere traitor, and the historian, Bishop Mihály Horváth, as minister of education, and invited the former government commissioners of the army divisions into his cabinet. Bertalan Szemere became prime minister, Sebő Vukovics minister of justice, László Csányi minister of transport and Count Kázmér Batthyány minister of foreign affairs. The cabinet, though mostly loyal to the principle of independence, did not fulfil Kossuth's expectations, and owing to Prime Minister Szemere's jealousy of Kossuth soon came under the influence of the peace party. As the first move of the peace party, parliament restricted considerably Kossuth's powers as governor: he could no longer issue decrees without the counter-signature of the appropriate minister, and the right to dissolve parliament was also taken out of his hands.

### The Success of the Peace Party

In the meantime the Hungarian army was advancing victoriously. The objective of the second phase of the campaign was to liberate Komárom after a successful advance on the left bank of the Danube, and to cut the retreat route of the enemy from Pest. A division of the Hungarian army under General Aulich's command surrounded Pest, while three other divisions turned northwards, and after a victory at Vác on 10 April, and another at Nagysalló on the 19th, on 22 April they liberated Komárom, which had been besieged since the end of December. However, owing to delay in crossing over to the right bank, the strategic objective of the campaign could not be realized. Pest was evacuated by Marshal Welden, who had succeeded Windisch-graetz as commander-in-chief of the imperial army, and Aulich's division, taking possession of the town on 24 April, was enthusiastically welcomed. But the imperial army on its retreat towards Vienna was only attacked by the Hungarians, who had great difficulties in crossing the Danube, when most of their numbers had already reached Győr. The attack of 26 April was indecisive, and the following morning the enemy proceeded without serious losses. The attempt to cut the enemy forces and annihilate them had thus failed again, and the failure at Komárom was followed by other mishaps. Nevertheless, the military situation at that time was extremely favourable for the Hungarian army. The main body of the Austrian army fled towards the frontier in complete disarray; Perczel reoccupied the Bácska region; in addition to Transylvania, General Bem cleared the south Tisza region of the enemy; and in the northern counties and in Transdanubia voluntary units and reservists liquidated the remaining forces of the enemy. The road to Vienna was open to the victorious Hungarian forces. Görgey, however, who was in secret alliance with the peace party, did not move against Vienna, but led his army towards Buda. Kossuth approved of this step, because he believed that the recapture of Buda would have beneficial effects both at home and abroad. The siege, on the other hand, dragged on, panic no longer seized the enemy camp, and the reorganization of their forces began. The Hungarian flag was hoisted on the ramparts of Buda after a successful assault by the Hungarians on 21 May but by then it was no longer a secret throughout Europe that Czar Nicholas I had announced his intention of intervening in the war on the side of Austria.

This would have been a fatal development in the War of Independence even if the declaration of independence had been followed, as Kossuth and the left wing desired, by a revolutionary dictatorship.

As it was, affairs on the political front took just the opposite trend. The government, according to the intentions of the peace party, continued to isolate Kossuth, whose sympathies rested with the left wing, and to paralyse the organs of the revolution: the police were cleared of radical elements, most commissioners were recalled, the revolutionary courts suspended, and the left-wing paper, *Március Tizenötödike* critical of government measures, banned. A decision of the council of ministers passed at the suggestion of General Klapka also proved fatal: it stated that the Hungarians should dispense with offensive warfare, and limit the aim of the campaign beginning early in May to a defensive war, and preparations were made accordingly.

Görgey was appointed minister of war by Kossuth, who imagined that by this means he could save the army from his influence. But Kossuth miscalculated. Damjanich, picked as Görgey's successor, the staunchest adherent of Kossuth, loyal to independence, and the best general of the army, met with a serious accident. Thus Görgey could retain the general command, using also the short spell of his ministry in Debrecen for negotiations with the peace party, and for hatching plans to prepare the overthrow of Kossuth. The peace party's plans to rescind the dethronement of the Habsburgs was frustrated by Kossuth through the adjournment of parliament at the beginning of June for an indefinite period. Görgey advised a military coup, but the peace party, fearing the masses, declined it. In these circumstances no effort to strengthen the country's defences could be completely successful. Parliament had voted the 50,000 recruits demanded by Kossuth, but recruiting did not go according to plan, as the poor peasants, who had furnished most of the recruits for the army, were frustrated in their hopes and lost their interest. They were little impressed by a decree of the ministry of justice, which, at Kossuth's suggestion, promised to safeguard the peasants' interests against the landlords by stating that only those lands could be regarded as demesne land which could be authentically proved to be such by the landlord, and any contested land was to remain in the peasants' hands, pending a legal decision. This was undoubtedly an important measure, but it did not concern the peasantry as a whole, and could not give them encouragement—the less so, because Szemere as minister of the interior had at the same time severely suppressed all peasant movements which flared up in the course of the liberating warfare.





cleared woodlands and garden land with the aid of state compensation, and the abolition of other feudal vestiges. The bill could have been made valid by order, but the government held back, and decided to discuss it in parliament; but in the deteriorating situation, with parliament moving to and fro, it could not be achieved: the plan foundered on the collapse of the War of Independence.

Yet even a partial fulfilment of the rightful claims of the peasantry would have helped the solution of another grave problem, that of the non-Hungarian nationalities. They were dissatisfied with the March constitution which had been forced on them, and, tired of the war, supported Austria with far less enthusiasm than previously. To come to terms with them should have been possible by satisfying the demands of their peasant masses and by meeting their most important national aspirations. Discussions went on in March with the Serbs, and in May with certain democratic leaders of the Rumanians; the former were renewed in June, the latter ended in a bloody skirmish owing to a tragic misunderstanding, causing the death of János Dragos and Vasvári, who had been responsible for the discussions. Negotiations with the Rumanians were resumed under the great Rumanian revolutionary, Bălcescu, and the Hungarians government agreed on a draft resolution, deciding on 14 July, beside political questions, the release of demesne land and compensation for illegally occupied land. This draft, without the demands of the peasants which comprised part of the peasants' law then in preparation, served as a pattern for the Nationality Bill accepted by the rump parliament at Szeged in its last session, on 28 July. The bill, the only nationality law in Europe at the time, though preserving Hungarian as the language of diplomacy, permitted a wide scope for the various nationalities' languages in administration, legal life and the Church, pronounced an amnesty and authorized the government to grant other rights also to the nationalities. The law, born at the last minute, remained a symbol of mutual goodwill, but could not exercise the beneficial influence it could have done in earlier, more favourable circumstances.

### **The Failure of the War of Independence**

By the time the bill was passed, the Hungarian revolution was nearing the last act of its tragic denouement. To escape the imperial forces, the Hungarian government moved to Arad, after quarrels and dissensions in the cabinet and parliament between the peace party demanding negotiations and a military dictatorship to be exercised by Görgey,

and Kossuth and his faction. After a hazardous journey, Görgey reached the Great Plain, having inspired in his officers the hope of a favourable armistice with his uncompleted attempts at agreement with the enemy. Meanwhile a considerable, but not very belligerent army was concentrated at Szeged, under the supreme command of Dembinski, who being compelled to give up the Tisza line against Haynau, moved towards Temesvár instead of Arad, which had been determined by Kossuth as the assembly point. He hoped to join Bem's army, but the latter had left Transylvania after six weeks' heroic fighting and the memorable defeat of Segesvár, where Petőfi had lost his life on 31 July. Kossuth then relieved Dembinski of his post and appointed Bem as the new commander-in-chief. The latter engaged Haynau's forces at Temesvár on 9 August. Owing to a number of tragic circumstances, Bem lost the battle, and the beaten army fell to pieces, everyone fleeing wherever he could.

Görgey's army reached Arad on 10 August, at the same time as the emissaries of the government, Szemere and Kázmér Batthyány, coming from the Russian high command with the reply of the czarist commander-in-chief, Prince Paskievich. His message was that he had come to Hungary to fight, and the Hungarians should discuss the terms of surrender with the imperial commander-in-chief. Görgey announced at the cabinet meeting that he was willing to fight the imperial forces, but not the Russians. Kossuth met Görgey in person to persuade him to continue fighting. His effort, however, proved futile, especially after General Pöltenberg had brought Paskievich's message, in the evening of 10 August, that he was willing to deal with Görgey about the terms of the armistice. A final decision was reached the following morning, when General Guyon's report arrived about the defeat at Temesvár. After that Görgey, as the commander of the only fighting army corps, became master of the situation. From then onwards he no longer discussed anything but commanded: Kossuth was expected to hand over full military and civilian command. Kossuth, at the advice of his ministers, Csányi, Vukovics and Aulich, signed his appointment at 2 p.m. of the same day. They were convinced that full power would enable Görgey to negotiate the best possible terms for the Hungarian nation from the Russian commander-in-chief. They were badly deceived, as was the army and the whole nation. From his position of power, Görgey informed General Rüdiger, commandant of the third cavalry division of the czarist army, that he was willing to surrender unconditionally. The mournful act took place two days later, on 13 August, near Arad on the field of Világos. The Russian commander exercised pardon exclusively for Görgey:



the soldiers and politicians alike were handed over to the bloodthirsty Austrian General Haynau. Kossuth with other military and civilian leaders escaped through Orsova to Turkey.

The heroic struggle of a year and a half was over, an instructive chapter in Hungarian history, inspiring even in defeat. The war was lost, and an unfavourable international situation was almost as much to blame for the defeat as the superior force of the enemy. The many weaknesses of the revolutionary camp also contributed to the defeat: the contradictory attitudes of the class conducting the struggle, the failure to solve the basic problems of the peasantry and of the nationalities in a progressive manner, and the counter-revolutionary leadership of the armed forces of the revolution. Quite a few of the achievements of the revolution were lost; for a long time to come there was no hope of independence, nor did the bourgeois achievements of the revolution survive in any but a twisted, mutilated form, serving the interests of a foreign power. With the failure of the War of Independence, the hope of extending the liberation of the serfs over and above the framework of the law of 1848 and of allotting more land to the peasants, was lost. The liberation of the serfs remained, however, the achievement which raised Hungary in March 1848 from its former feudal backwardness, and opened the way for capitalist development.

*Chapter VI***THE PERIOD OF NEO-ABSOLUTISM  
(1849-1867)**

### Hungary's Incorporation in the Unitary and Centralized Monarchy

What had seemed impossible in the spring of 1848 became an accomplished fact in the autumn of 1849: the power of the Habsburg dynasty was restored. Venice surrendered in August, and Hungary, 'the rebellious province', lay prostrate at the emperor's feet. The empire had survived the revolutionary upheaval. Victory, however, was gained only by armed force, including foreign armies, and by divisions among the peoples of the empire. Victors have always been liable, short-sightedly, to forget about the circumstances which produced their victory. So too, within a short time, the Habsburg government considered pacification of the people by force of arms as a solid basis for political reorganization. Forgetful of the humiliating circumstances of the recent past, they aspired further than a simple restoration of the old system; they aimed at the realization of the imperial idea of Joseph II: a unitary and centralized *Gesamtstaat*.

The government of Prince Felix Schwarzenberg introduced a strictly centralized system of absolutism, and after the death of the prime minister in 1852, it was brought to perfection by his minister of the interior, Alexander Bach, an ex-revolutionary of bourgeois extraction. Contemporaries came to associate the whole system with the name of Bach. After the military victory the government had no qualms about breaking its promises concerning a constitution, nor did it care about public opinion. The constitution forced on the empire in the spring of 1849 was soon disregarded. A decree issued at the end of 1851 (Sylvester Patent) suspended the constitution and promulgated measures to strengthen the emperor's absolutistic power.

The renunciation of the liberalism of 1848 did not mean, however, a return to the pre-1848 Estates constitution. The government did not re-establish the old offices, nor the provincial and local autonomy of the former privileged Estates. The new system did not recognize any particularism, national autonomy, or constitutional control. Countries were reduced to provinces, nations became ethnic groups, and in place of the constitution a powerless, nine-member Imperial Council

(*Reichsrat*) was established: this was the administrative scheme of 'supra-national' neo-absolutism. Francis Joseph, who ascended the throne in December 1848 without having been crowned, disposed of greater power and ruled with greater authority than any of his predecessors, or any of his contemporaries.

The Schwarzenberg-Bach government took over certain of the achievements of 1848 which it could not abolish, or which were suitable to the new system. The greatest achievement of the revolution, the abolition of serfdom, remained, equality before the law was recognized, and the semi-liberal Austrian penal code and judicial system were introduced throughout the empire. Education was modernized and a uniform system of taxation was adopted. Tariff and credit regulations became uniform throughout the common imperial customs area created in 1850. Thus the new system, both in the mode of government and in its content, was not simply a restoration or continuation of the old absolutism of Francis and Metternich. It can justly be called neo-absolutism.

At the same time neo-absolutism was neither the consummation of the work of Joseph II nor the model of modern progress which contemporary and subsequent adherents of the *Gesamtstaat* tried to represent it as. All the reforms aiming at modernization of the empire were intertwined with the defence of feudal remnants and of the aristocracy, with the suppression of the national and democratic ideas, with the fostering of a rootless dynastic 'patriotism' and with Germanization. The liberation of the serfs proceeded in a more restricted form than during the revolution, with more consideration given to the interests of the landowners. Many of the liberal reforms of 1848 were disregarded; in the administration of justice inequality before the law, a remnant of feudal procedure, partially survived, and strict censorship was reintroduced. The difference between Josephinism and neo-absolutism became especially evident in the government's attitude towards the Catholic Church. Whereas the enlightened Joseph II had done much to limit the power of the Church, Francis Joseph did much to increase it. He permitted the return of the Jesuits, allowed unlimited contact between the Austrian hierarchy and the Holy See, and resigned the *ius placetum regis*, the Hungarian monarch's century-old, jealously guarded right. In the Concordat of 1855 he ceded near absolute power to the Church in matters of marriage and education and gave substantial material advantages to ecclesiastical institutions and the higher clergy.

On the other hand, the neo-absolutist government was quite moderate in introducing the most urgently needed reforms. After the

defeat of the War of Independence and the suppression of the revolution of 1848 the Habsburgs desired to preserve and consolidate the power of their loyal aristocracy and bureaucracy through the most conservative methods. The system relied on a quite narrow social basis, for the government paid little attention either to 'Old Conservatives' with federal leanings, or to constitutional liberals, thus pushing into opposition even the moderate elements of the nationalities. This strongly centralized absolutism was dependent on aristocrat administrators, on an army trained to place its first loyalty in the dynasty, on the Catholic clergy, and on the civil service. Certain items of its programme, and its foreign policy, were in the interests of the Austro-German bourgeoisie. Austrian leadership in the German Confederation, the so-called *grossdeutsche* orientation in foreign policy, seemed a sure way of maintaining the supremacy of the Austro-German ruling classes and their influence in German affairs.

The centralized *Gesamtstaat* and German supremacy were the illusory aims for the sake of which Hungary was forcibly incorporated in the unitary empire created and sustained by military power.

The defeat of the War of Independence was followed by the military occupation of Hungary and by General Haynau's overt dictatorship. Haynau thirsted for revenge, for the punishment of the defeated rebels, and viewed as his primary task the teaching of a memorable and bloody lesson. After the surrender at Világos (13 August) and the capture of Komárom Castle, which held out till the beginning of October, the captured leaders of the War of Independence were executed, while the rank and file were imprisoned or forcibly conscripted into the Austrian army. The crowning gesture of these bloodthirsty reprisals came on 6 October, on the first anniversary of the Viennese revolution: 13 heroic generals of the War of Independence were executed at Arad; and in Pest, in the yard of the New Building (*Neugebäude*), called 'the Hungarian Bastille', Count Lajos Batthyány, the first independent Hungarian prime minister, was brutally shot. He had always been a sincere adherent of the Habsburg dynasty and worked for the agreement with Vienna. But this was not yet the end of Haynau's work: government commissioners, officers and simple insurgents suffered the same fate. Haynau's reign of terror was remembered for its military tribunals, executions, mass imprisonments and persecutions.

The unrestrained bloodthirstiness of absolutism transgressed the possible limits of any acquiescence. If the War of Independence created heroes, the reprisals produced martyrs and filled the bleak pages of national history with mournful episodes that were to evoke

anti-Austrian feelings among the public for a century to come. Retaliation and humiliation created a wider breach between the nation and the dynasty than the memory of wounded national pride could ever have done. Savage reprisals make it hard to reconcile a nation and in the long run prove to be extremely short-sighted. In Hungary these dubious methods were supplemented by the no less short-sighted *Verwirkungstheorie*. According to Schwarzenberg's and Bach's doubtful legal theory, Hungary had forfeited its constitutional rights with the uprising and the deposition of the Habsburgs and should therefore be treated as a conquered province. In the spirit of this unfortunate theory, and in the wake of the gallows and dungeons, Baron Geringer, the new governor-general of Hungary, who was directly under the Austrian ministry of interior, began to organize the civil administration in the autumn of 1849.

Hungary proper was divided into five districts, with Sopron, Pozsony, Kassa, Nagyvárad and Pest-Buda as centres, the latter city also becoming the seat of the governor-general's office. Transylvania became detached from Hungary again, and new provinces were formed, under the names of Serbian Voivodina and the Banat of Temes. All forms of constitutional life ceased, including the diet and the former county administration. Pro-Habsburg lord lieutenants were appointed to head the districts. Although Hungarians, too, volunteered for the higher posts of the civil service, the rank and file officials had to be imported from the reliable source of the Austrian bureaucracy. The country was practically inundated by a flood of foreign clerks who—in order to win confidence—were put in braided tunics, decorated by the double-beaded eagle, and hats with cocked feathers and swords—a kind of Hungarian uniform *à la Viennoise*. The term 'Bach hussar' aptly stuck to them. These officials were supported by a gendarmerie, organized in 1849, and by the city police forces. The police controlled an extensive system of spies and agents-provocateurs. The hated gendarmerie, eager to discover a new conspiracy at every turn, brutally harassed the people, on the plea of security. Their attention was concentrated on keeping the inhabitants of the *puszta* and scattered farmsteads in order; bandits were regarded not only as the public enemies of order and security, but also as dangerous and suspect to the foreign oppressor. In spite of the criminal charges levied against them, these 'Robin Hoods' enjoyed at that time the sympathy of the people. The famous bandit-leader, Sándor Rózsa, became the hero of legend for his bravery in the War of Independence and for his exploits in robbing the landlords and outwitting the gendarmes. The romantic figure of the famous outlaw and guerrilla

continued to live on in popular legends long after his capture in 1857.

This government based on informers, the gendarmerie, the military and the 'Bach bussars' continued to harass the nation for a full decade. In the summer of 1850 the arrogant Haynau, who had become an embarrassment to the dynasty before the eyes of the world, was dismissed, and within another year Geringer also had to go. The sole significant change was that the new governor-general, Archduke Albrecht, was at the same time chief of the military command. Absolute power was maintained, and the nervous, suspicious police pursued with bureaucratic narrow-mindedness the last vestiges of national feeling, making oppression their main concern. By the mid-fifties, the regime appeared to be firmly established. It seemed as if 'the conquered province' had been successfully integrated into the centralized *Gesamtstaat*. The bulk of the nation, though hostile and resentful, seemed, apart from isolated instances of resistance, to be resigned to the new system.

#### Economic and Social Conditions under Neo-Absolutism

Capitalist development in Eastern Europe was in large measure determined by the social and economic relations of late feudalism and by the conditions of a division of labour with the West. Within the general conditions, however, different variations were possible, dependent on the course and results of the bourgeois revolution. In comparison with the rest of Eastern Europe, the Hungarian revolution of 1848 laid the foundations for a relatively more liberal and smoother tradition towards capitalism. The neo-absolutist government did not touch these foundations, but in accordance with the conservative nature of the regime, it expanded on the anti-democratic features of the 1848 arrangement. The urbarial patent issued in March 1853 acknowledged only the basic law of 1848, which had transformed only the urbarial tenures in the possession of the serfs into free peasant property. During the revolution, as a result of the stubborn efforts of the peasants, dues on vineyards were abolished, and the emancipation of the serfs on domanial land by state compensation was considered. The decree of 1853, on the other hand, provided for the restoration of part of the non-urbarial land to the landowners, and prescribed, together with restoration of the tithe on vineyards, compulsory compensation, paid by the peasants. Other important feudal privileges of former landlords were left untouched.

More important than the decree itself were the measures by which it was enforced. For the peasants it was vitally important who should judge in the entangled legal situation concerning the ownership of land. Since the law of 1848 there had been innumerable disputes, which had frequently degenerated into savage fights, concerning the nature of the land owned by the peasant, whether it was *urbarial* or *domanial*. The *urbarial* courts of the late 1850s on the whole protected the interests of the nobility. They did not take into account long-standing practices, but only rights which could be proved by documents, especially those fixed by the *urbarial* regulation of Maria Theresa. These often did not reflect the real state of affairs in the villages, but the courts decided in the majority of cases in favour of the landlord. The procedure established by the government was thus far more conservative than that of 1848, and the new settlement was less favourable to the peasants. The development of capitalist agriculture in Hungary followed a pattern similar to that in Prussia: the dominance of the large estates and the economic and political rule of their owners was established, while the remnants of feudal rights over the peasantry were preserved.

The end of serfdom, despite the many drawbacks of the settlement, made possible the fairly rapid development of capitalist production. A railway was built, linking Pest with Vienna and with the corn-growing areas of the Great Plain and the region beyond the Tisza respectively. Other lines linked Croatia and Transdanubia with Austria and the Adriatic coast. The total length of railway lines in 1867 was more than 2,000 kilometres. The speedy growth of trade was encouraged by a quarter-century-long boom in agriculture, providing favourable conditions for the sale of Hungarian agricultural products in the empire and in Western Europe. Loans and new businesses coming into the country contributed to an abundance of capital, stimulating economic life on a large scale.

The development of capitalism affected the Hungarian landowners in conflicting ways. On the one hand, they were deprived of free labour and other services of the former serfs and of a great number of privileges, but, on the other hand, they were offered favourable markets and transport facilities and the possibility of more efficient production. The big landowners, especially in the western part of the country, in the Great Plain and the fertile southern parts, soon recovered from their losses by making the most of the new situation.

In the first years of the transition they, too, were dependent on the labour of their former serfs, who continued to 'work off' the rent for their plots in the traditional way; but then, through the redistribution

and consolidation of their lands, by leasing out some of their estates, and with the aid of loans, which were now made more easily available to them, most of the landowners were able to make the change to modern farming. More advanced methods were applied on the large estates, steam threshing machines ousting hand threshing and treading-out procedures. Many big landowners also became businessmen, participating in the founding of railway companies and other capitalist enterprises.

In contrast with the aristocracy, only a thin upper layer of the numerous gentry made the transition to capitalist farming successfully. Those few who did succeed were those who had extensive *demesne* land in their possession, and considerable fortunes. The position of the landed gentry was seriously impaired by the transition to capitalism. The loss of *urbarial* land and of labour services, and the abolition of entailment suddenly revealed the differentiation which had been taking place, the century-long process of impoverishment. Most of the gentry did not possess more than a couple of hundred *hold*\* of land, often no more than the equivalent of one or two peasant tenures, and they were saddled with debts, outmoded farming methods and inadequate sources of income. The transition completely ruined the lesser gentry, many being obliged to sell their mortgaged land, which was hardly sufficient to provide for a man of poor peasant status. Even the more capable struggled with heavy burdens, the lack of capital and labour, and the unaccustomed load of taxation. They tried to improve their lot by borrowing money, by selling part of their land, and leasing out other portions. The remaining land was cultivated with obsolete equipment, a small number of hired labourers and peasant service. In the first decades, a steady boom in corn helped to a certain extent those better-off gentry who were capable of producing for the market to maintain the standard of living appropriate to country gentlemen.

The peasants, three-quarters of the total population, were occupied for decades after their liberation with the struggle to acquire land. At the time of the *urbarial* regulation only one-third of them had tenures; the other peasants were released from serfdom as cotters or mere landless labourers. For them the acquisition of small plots of land left out of the *urbarial* registers, cleared woodlands, or successfully contested portions of *domanial* estates, or from the former common grazing land and forest-land, was a question of life and death. The settlement of the tangled heritage of feudalism rarely ended in

\* 1 *hold* or cadastral yoke equals 1.42 acres (0.57 hectare).

amicable agreements. The landowners expected compensation at the expense of the peasantry for the 'sacrifice' they had made in their favour. Lawsuits were legion; every inch of ground was contested, sometimes before official forums, sometimes out on the land, with the local landowner, the surveyor, the imperial police officiating. The urharial settlement was protracted for two decades, in some areas even longer; and during this period it became the main issue of the intensified class struggle between the landowners and the imperial authorities on the one hand, and the peasants on the other. In certain places, for example, in the market-towns of the Great Plain, it even led to conflicts between different strata within the peasantry.

The peasantry eventually succeeded in obtaining nearly 40 per cent of the cultivated land of the country. About three-quarters of the peasantry acquired some plot of land, and only one-quarter remained a landless, agrarian proletariat. The great bulk of the new 'landowners' consisted of those poor peasants who owned 1-5 hectares of land. The liberated serfs cultivated their scattered plots with obsolete implements and mainly in the traditional three-field system of cultivation. Nevertheless the end of feudal obligations and the possibility to work in one's own interest resulted in substantial progress. The smallness of their plots and the boom in corn encouraged the peasants to break up the former grazing land. Throughout the country extensive field production, especially one-sided corn production, rapidly gained ground at the expense of the pasture or the traditional, extensive animal husbandry. Labourers were in great demand; even some of the landless peasants received share-farms, the rent for which they worked off with their labour, or else they hired themselves out to landlords who were badly in need of labour. The two decades after the liberation of the serfs gave the peasantry a start and led to a slight improvement in their condition.

Modernization in agriculture, within the limitations of Eastern European economic and social conditions, was the most important development of the time, but the modernization of industry took its first strides also, though not as a whole but only in certain branches. There are many historians who believe that the backwardness of Hungarian industry and the failure of 'independent capitalist development' was due mainly to the political and economic dependence of the country. The fact that Hungary was absorbed into an empire dominated by the more highly developed industry of Austria certainly affected the development of a good many branches of Hungarian industry, especially that of light industry. It is a matter of fact that the course of development of Hungarian industry was dependent on the economic

interests of Austrian capitalists and Hungarian landowners. It is very unlikely, on the other hand, that independence alone would have produced the indispensable prerequisites for an industrial revolution in backward, agrarian Hungary, particularly in the midst of the European free-trade system. These basic prerequisites were, namely, the modernization of agriculture, a wide railway network, the rapid expansion of primary materials production, and a capitalist system of credit. In any case, it was the common market of the empire that created conditions favourable to agricultural commodity production and trade, to railway building and the development of the extractive industries.

The most thriving branch of the Hungarian economy after 1848, owing to the steady boom, was the corn trade. This became the main source for the accumulation of capital, in the hands of mainly Jewish corn merchants. From the 1850s, commercial capital was attracted to the food industry, which was developing well owing to a number of favourable circumstances. This led to the building of Europe's most important flour-mill centre, and the flourishing of the manufacture of beer and spirits. The sugar industry, on the other hand, owed its development to Austrian capital.

Austrian industrialization and the building of an extensive railway system attracted foreign capitalists to exploit the rich resources of raw materials in the country. Subsequently new coal mines were opened, and new iron foundries established. Austrian companies replaced or took over the primitive enterprises of Hungarian aristocrats. The country, however, only offered raw materials, at most crude iron. Refinement and manufacture were carried on in Austria. Under these circumstances Hungarian iron and machinery production lagged far behind that of raw materials. In the former area mainly small workshops (Ganz, Vidats, Röck) worked their way up to the level of medium-sized factories in those industries best adapted to the country's difficult conditions. These included the manufacture of railway wagons and the manufacture and repair of agricultural and milling machinery.

Humble undertakings emerged also in the leather, chemical and wood-working industries, but the other branches of light industry, and above all that gold mine of early capitalism, the textile industry, atrophied owing to strong competition in the market. The credit system showed no signs of developing. There was insufficient capital in the country owing to unstable conditions, and because Vienna jealously guarded its credit monopoly. Apart from thriving corn production, trade in agricultural produce and the flour industry, other branches of the economy were able to make but little progress during the period of neo-absolutism.



The bulk of the small masters, the guild bourgeoisie of the cities and market-towns, were unable to assimilate to big industry or to increase in numbers and fortunes as did the mercantile bourgeoisie. Modern industry and commerce pushed aside and ruined this class still mired in feudal conditions. In the free competition of capitalism not only village handicrafts but many branches of guild industry steadily declined. As a consequence of industrialization, on the other hand, the number of workers increased. During the period of absolutism, their number doubled to reach 300,000. Most of these workers, owing to the industrial structure of the country, were employed still in handicrafts, because the flour industry, the most highly developed branch of industry, did not require skilled labour, and the skilled workers employed in mining, iron foundries and the machine industry were recruited from other countries.

#### National Movements. 'Passive Resistance'

The great majority of Hungarian society was opposed to the oppressive system of neo-absolutism, but sharp class conflicts had disintegrated by this time the temporary national unity which had existed during the revolution. That important section of the aristocracy which had opposed revolutionary developments in 1848 continued to support the crown. It saw in the events justification for its anti-revolutionary conservatism. Many accepted high offices, either in Vienna or at home, in the service of the autocracy. But the standard-bearers and politically influential members of the aristocracy were discontented with the bureaucratic centralism of Vienna, particularly as they were not wanted in the government. This group, called the 'Old Conservatives', formed the opposition to the government. They petitioned the court with unflagging zeal to persuade the emperor to accept their programme of restoration of the pre-1848 arrangements.

The political attitude of the gentry was divided. There were some, and not even rare exceptions, who, turning their backs on the national cause, accepted office and served the autocracy. The Bach system had no shortage of officials recruited from the members of well-known noble families. There were others, bold patriots, who were preparing for another uprising. In the early 1850s, at Kossuth's instigation and with his support, secret organizations started in Pest, in the Székely (Szekel) country of Transylvania, in the Mátra mountains to the north, and in the western part of Hungary (Transdanubia). The organizers, former officers of the Hungarian national army or revolutionary in-

tellectuals, believed that with the aid of well-equipped, armed groups they could spark a national uprising when the given moment arrived. These organizations, which made little effort at concealment, were soon detected by Austrian agents. In 1851 the *Sekel* organization, and in the following year the other organizations, were discovered. Among the leaders József Mack, artillery commander in Komárom, and Colonel Sándor Gál succeeded in escaping; Gáspár Noszlopy, a former government commissioner of 1848, and the famous guerrilla leader, Károly Jubál, as well as János Török, József Gál, Márk Gasparich and many others were executed.

The majority of the nobility had inclined towards compromise in 1849, and even more so after the defeat. This is reflected in the pamphlets of the most significant political journalist of the time, Zsigmond Kemény, who formulated the arguments of the disenchantment with the defeated revolution. Kemény, Pál Somssich and József Eötvös recommended in their writings a reasonable compromise between dynastic power, the unitary empire and the constitutional rights of Hungary. Victorious Habsburg absolutism, however, showed no inclination to make concessions. Absolute power enabled the government to inflict punishment and dictate its will without heeding the suggestions of either conservatives or liberals. Thus, the autocracy itself drove into opposition the bulk of the gentry, which, steering a middle course between the extremes of submission or conspiracy, entrenched itself in passive resistance. These noblemen withdrew from public life, accepted no offices, and wherever they could, evaded the directives of absolutism and boycotted its representatives. They spent their time managing their estates, filing lawsuits, and awaiting a better future. Passive resistance was the political course most suited to the majority of the gentry who did not accept the abolition of constitutional independence and rejected centralized absolutism, but, on the other hand, did not wish to assume the leadership of a new national struggle. At the same time, passive resistance reflected a duality springing from the vital economic requirements of the middle and lower sections of the nobility, the need for a nationalist but anti-democratic solution of the difficulties arising from the bourgeois transformation.

Until the end of the 1850s, passive resistance seemed a realistic attitude, so long as the whole of Europe was in the grip of reaction and the autocracy was relatively stable. The policy of the gentry was supported by the majority of the small landowners, the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie. The wealthier elements of the Hungarian bourgeoisie, the well-to-do merchants and financiers, had become reconciled

to the unitary empire, which suited their interests, but they, too, objected to the lack of constitutional life and political security. It was the declining, downtrodden guild-bourgeois or petty-noble elements of the petty bourgeoisie who formed the active basis of national resistance, along with the patriotic plebeian masses of the towns who rebelled against autocracy.

The arts also fostered the spirit of national resistance. Although many writers and artists had been killed, or were suffering in exile, prison and despair, the age nevertheless produced its masterpieces. János Arany paid tribute to the revolution in his bitter satire full of sarcasm and self-abuse, *The Gipsies of Nagyida*, and in his narrative poems and ballads. Conceived in the tragic misery of a disjointed age, his works fostered the popular-national trend. The allegorical poems of Mihály Tompa and the last visions of Mihály Vörösmarty expressed the misery of humiliation and faith in resistance, and fostered the hope of a better future. Imre Madách's great verse drama, *The Tragedy of Man*, belongs to the family of 'questing heroes' and is akin to *Faust*, *Peer Gynt* and other philosophical dramas. Following the suppression of the revolution, Madách, torn by the conflict between the individual and the community, between an idealism striving for the improvement of mankind and a scepticism disenchanted with abstract ideals, posed the ultimate questions of human history and existence: 'Will the human race ever progress?', or 'Can it not break out of the circle of existence?' The conclusion of cool reason is disheartening, but the reply of the spirit is a confidence which transcends reason. There were other writers who tried to relieve the pain with romantic pictures of hope and by fostering national pride: Mór Jókai's novels revived the glory of the country's past. The pictures of Viktor Madarász and Bertalan Székely helped to keep the national spirit alive, as did the sculpture of Miklós Izsó. Ferenc Erkel's *Bánk bán* is the masterpiece of national-romantic opera. The works of artists, scientists, writers and historians were devoted to the same spirit.

The spirit and hopes of resistance at home were also sustained by the great number of patriots who went into exile abroad. Ferenc Pulszky, the representative of the revolutionary government, stayed on in London after the defeat of the War of Independence. He maintained a wide range of contacts with influential British politicians and writers and did his utmost to popularize the Hungarian fight for freedom in the press. His activities were not without success: there was a noticeable sense of sympathy in British public opinion towards the oppressed Hungarians.

A sizable group of exiles, including Kossuth, went to Turkey. There, however, the 'hospitality' they received proved less friendly, when they were quickly interned and kept for most of their stay in Kütahia in Asia Minor.

Thus the overwhelming majority of the nation opposed the degrading system of neo-absolutism. Even the peasantry, which was fully occupied at that time with the struggle to obtain land and with the lawsuits against former landlords, detested foreign rule. Most of them understood that the 1848 revolution had given them their liberation and land. The memory of the fight for independence was alloyed in their minds with a certain amount of peasant democracy, just as the struggles of the age of absolutism were linked with national motives, too. A radical national and at the same time democratic agrarian policy would have united both aspirations. But it was problematic whether the political leadership was willing to continue or capable of continuing the 1848 policy of 'union of interests.' It was the critical period of neo-absolutism that provided the answer to this question.

#### The Critical Years of Neo-Absolutism.

##### The Activities of the Hungarian Emigration

In the mid-nineteenth century the 'supra-national' empire, achieved by forcible centralization and mainly concerned with germanizing the whole of the Habsburg domains, was the main obstacle to the national independence and the process of national unification of the peoples within and beyond its confines. During this period three important historical processes—the national unification of Italy and of Germany, and the restoration of Hungarian independence—ripened and exploded with such elemental force that the very existence of the Monarchy seemed to be hanging in the balance.

The complications first manifested themselves in foreign policy. During the Crimean War (1853-6), in which England, France, Piedmont (with a view to securing the union of Italy) and Turkey fought against Russia, Austria tried to remain neutral. For this ingratitude Austria lost the support of her protector, Czarist Russia, without securing the goodwill of the other powers. Piedmont made good use of Austria's isolation. Her prime minister, Cavour, signed an anti-Austrian alliance with Napoleon III. After a short period of preparations war broke out between the two sides in April 1859. Austria's involvement gave hope, and a new impetus, to the disorganized emigration, and roused the slumbering public at home.

On the energetic intervention of the government of the United States—supported by the British government—in the autumn of 1851 Kossuth had been released from internment in Turkey. He left Turkey on board the *Mississippi*, an American steamship, and in late October and early November he made a veritably triumphal tour of Britain, from Southampton to London and Manchester. Afterwards, at the invitation of the American government, he visited the United States, where he stayed for more than six months. This trip too was of historic note. States, cities and organizations vied with each other to have him as speaker and to be able to celebrate him as a champion of freedom and a 'Hungarian George Washington'. In January 1852 he was ceremoniously received by the two houses of Congress and President Fillmore, though the latter retained a certain degree of reserve towards him. No matter how spectacular the innumerable expressions of sympathy shown towards him and the cause he represented, Kossuth failed to achieve the main—although wholly unrealistic—aim of his trip, securing the United States' diplomatic and military support against Habsburg and czarist absolutism. Leading American circles could hardly seriously contemplate such an intervention in Europe; they were, moreover, tied down by domestic struggles over the slave question in which—although inadvertently—Kossuth himself became involved. In the end Kossuth had to content himself with his successes as a speaker and the not insignificant financial support which he used for the preparation of a new uprising in Hungary.

Kossuth's memory has been kept alive by the streets named after him, and by those exiles who stayed on in the New World and established the first Hungarian settlements in the United States. Hungarians played a noteworthy role in the American Civil War, of the some 4,000 exiles no less than a thousand taking part in the struggles on the side of the North. Exceptionally meritorious services were rendered by General Sándor Asbóth, Colonel Fülöp Figyelmessy, Colonel Géza Mihalóczy and Colonel György Utassy. President Lincoln sent László Újházy, one of the leading Hungarian exiles in the United States, on a diplomatic mission to Italy; he was the first of a great many Hungarians, who served in the American diplomatic corps.

In June 1852, Kossuth returned to Britain and settled down there for a longer period. He was again esteemed and fêted as on his previous visit. No less than 110 books and several thousand articles were written about him, and exactly 153 poems dedicated to him. Kossuth himself indulged in large-scale literary and propaganda activity and won countless friends and adherents. As a measure of the esteem he enjoyed, we may quote the words of Cohen: "Kossuth is certainly a

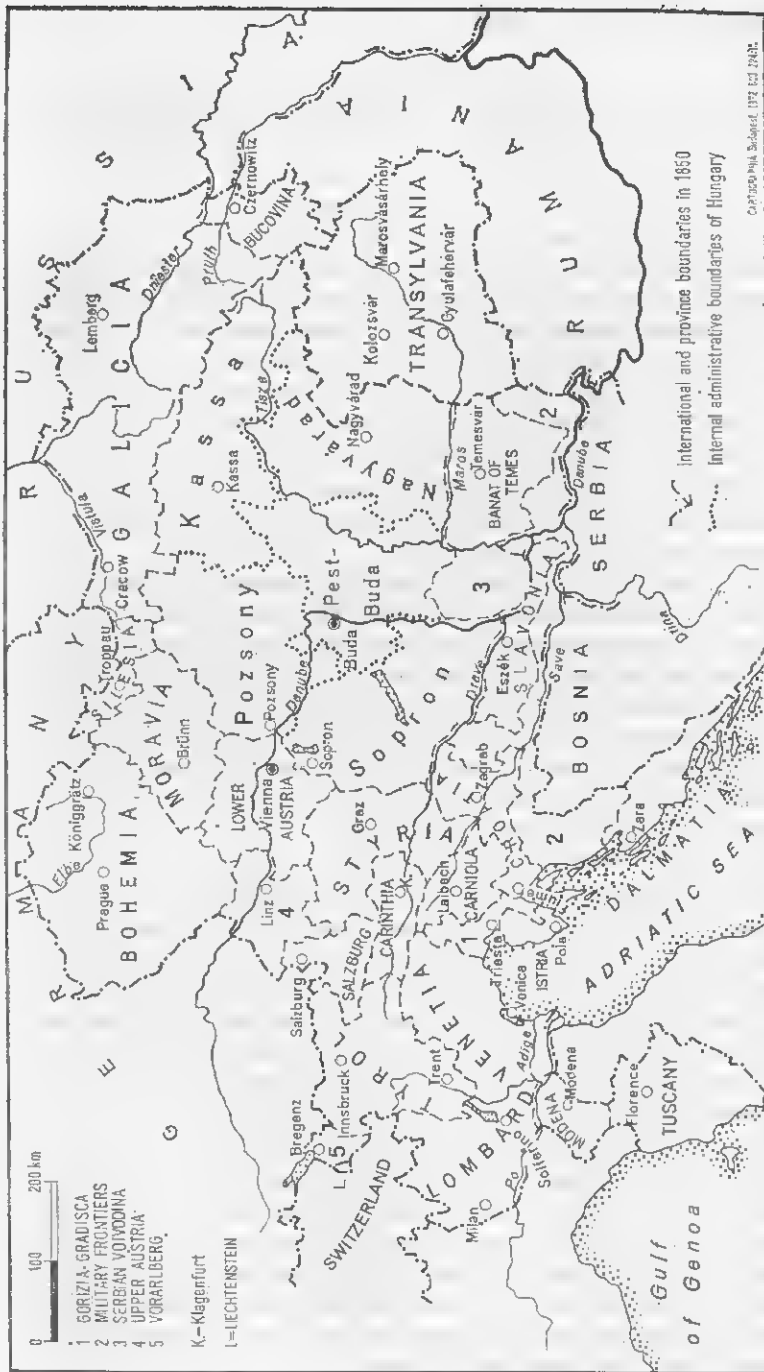
phenomenon; he is not only the first orator of the age, but he unites the qualities of a great administrator with a high morality and indefatigable courage. This is more than could be said either of Demosthenes or of Cicero." Notwithstanding this, official Britain held aloof from Kossuth's revolutionary schemes and operations, not wishing to poison its relations with Austria on account of him.

While in London, Kossuth was in close co-operation with the revolutionary organizations of the Italian, Russian and French émigrés and at the same time directed the clandestine movements in Hungary. At first he supported Mazzini's conspiratorial activities, but after the failure of the Milan uprising in 1853 he pursued a more cautious policy both in his relations with other foreign exiles and in encouraging secret organizations at home. He became aware that a favourable constellation of international relations was needed before he could engage the interest of Europe in the Hungarian national movement. The opportunity for this came in 1859.

During the fifties there were few links between the Hungarian exiles who were scattered all over Europe. New political developments, however, encouraged them to co-operate more closely, and work with more skill and determination. It was the energetic György Klapka and the influential and perspicacious László Teleki who first became involved with the Franco-Italian preparations for war. Napoleon III was not averse to the idea of stirring up the still-glowing fire of nationalism in Hungary. In April 1859 he had discussions with Kossuth concerning an anti-Austrian alliance.

Kossuth had little confidence in the French dictator; on the other hand, he did not want to miss the chance of retrieving Hungary's independence. He entered into the alliance on condition that the uprising might only be started with his permission and after the arrival of French and Italian troops on Hungarian soil. Kossuth's intention was, through the French-Italian alliance, to win over the Serbian and Rumanian principalities and at the same time assure military support for a new war of independence. He was also anxious to prevent a premature, isolated Hungarian uprising.

After the outbreak of the war, Kossuth, Teleki and Klapka formed a Hungarian government in exile, the Hungarian National Directorate, and began recruiting a Hungarian legion. Leaders at home were warned to use the utmost caution in their preparations, to reach agreement with the different nationalities, and beware of hasty action. As it turned out, there was little danger from overhasty action, even if the willingness had been present, as the war ended with unprecedented speed. The French and Italian troops inflicted heavy losses on the



The Habsburg Monarchy in 1850

enemy at Magenta on 4 June, and later at Solferino, on 24 June, where the Austrian army was under the personal command of Francis Joseph. Catastrophe for the Habsburg Empire was prevented by the same man who was responsible for the war: Napoleon III. The two emperors signed an armistice at Villafranca on 11 July 1859. Napoleon was content with the prize of Nice and Savoy, extorted from Victor Emmanuel in return for the annexation of Lombardy. Francis Joseph, on the other hand, was pleased that, at the price of losing Lombardy, he could stave off impending disaster. Hungary was not even mentioned in the settlement.

The peace which soon followed deflated but did not dissolve all hopes; it upset but did not frustrate the plans of the exiles, because the crisis of neo-absolutist rule was only eased temporarily, but still remained. The Austrian defeat had revealed the financial and political weaknesses of the system, its impotence and hopelessness. The court was again obliged to make concessions. A few days after Villafranca, Bach, the embodiment of the system, was dismissed, and the government was resuffled. A change of this small scale, however, could not appease renewed resistance. There were protests throughout the country against the imperial decree of 1859 curbing the free worship of Protestants. The demonstrations had political implications too, as did a series of commemorations of national historical figures like Kazinczy, Zrínyi, Kisfaludy and Vörösmarty. Balls, lectures and banquets, held at frequent intervals, were also used for political purposes.

This lighthearted form of resistance, however, was soon dampened by tragic events. On 15 March 1860, young people of Pest, peacefully demonstrating, were attacked by armed troops. One young man died, and his funeral provoked stormy demonstrations. Emotions had hardly subsided when István Széchenyi's death stunned the whole country. Széchenyi, retired to an internal exile in the mental asylum of Döhling, had begun to take an active part in politics again. He was harassed by the police above all because of his scathing critical pamphlet *Ein Blick auf den anonymen Rückblick* issued in reply to Bach's boastful memoirs. At the same time he was also deeply distressed by the tragic events of 15 March in Pest. The tragedy of his private life again became identified with that of the nation. He could see no way out: on 8 April he ended his life with his own hands. The deep mourning throughout the country strengthened national self-consciousness, even though there were not a few eulogies of Széchenyi's anti-revolutionary attitudes as well.

Early in May, good news arrived from Southern Italy. Garibaldi

with his thousand 'red shirts' had landed in Sicily. Among them were such prominent Hungarian soldiers as István Türr, who was raised to the rank of general, and Lajos Tüköry, who lost his life in the siege of Palermo. Garibaldi's army liberated the island in a few weeks and moved victoriously on to end the reactionary rule of the king of Naples. New waves of resistance followed in the wake of the war of liberation. During the summer of 1860, there followed in quick succession violent demonstrations for Kossuth and Garibaldi in Pest, in various provincial cities, at the St. Stephen's Day celebrations (20 August), at country fairs and at vintage festivals. Secret organizations were formed to prepare a worthy reception for Garibaldi. For not only the lesser nobility polishing their rusty swords, or the newsmongering intelligentsia, or the young people planning the formation of guerrilla bands but even the Austrian authorities assumed that after the capture of Naples, Garibaldi would march on Venice and in the ensuing war would send an expeditionary force to Hungary, too. The people were awaiting him as a liberator. Folk songs were composed about his coming, and on the walls of backwoods farmhouses his picture was placed beside that of Kossuth. The fertile folk imagination already saw its desires fulfilled; it pictured Garibaldi watering his horse at the banks of the Tisza, Kossuth distributing new shirts and Klapka rifles to the poor Hungarians. In fact Hungarian exiles both in Paris and Turin kept up the pressure in an attempt to revive the war against Austria. In 1860, even the highest French political circles maintained contacts with Hungarian emigré leaders and went so far as to conduct negotiations with delegates of the Hungarian revolutionary committee on their secret trips to France. For a time feverish preparations were still being made in Paris. Apparently serious agreements were arrived at, including detailed plans for an armed uprising to be launched in Hungary. In actual fact, in the autumn of 1860, Kossuth concluded a military pact with Cavour, who was reckoning with the possibility of a new war. The weapons destined for the Hungarians were actually dispatched by boat to Rumania. Even the Austrian government did not exclude the possibility of a war, although it did everything not to provoke one. Of course it could not afford to. As for Europe—and especially Her Majesty's Government—it showed no inclination to interfere in 'the internal affairs of the Italian people'.

### Constitutional Interlude and National Movement

Internal and external difficulties forced Vienna to make fresh concessions. In the spring of 1860, the *Reichsrat* established in 1851 was enlarged by the representation of the Old Conservative aristocracy. Archduke Albrecht was relieved of his post as governor-general in Hungary. In the autumn of 1860, more comprehensive reforms, based on the counsel and programme of the 'Old Conservatives', were decided upon; and on 20 October the emperor presented his peoples with a constitution.

The latter, called the October Diploma, reintroduced the provincial assemblies and the other offices which had existed before 1848. In Hungary, the parliament, the chancery, the governor-general's council and the county system were restored. The functions of the provincial assemblies were, however, much more restricted than before. The discussion of vital economic, financial and military questions was made the competence of a new *Reichsrat*, consisting of a fixed number of deputies from the provincial assemblies, while the power of decision was reserved to the monarch. Thus, the October Diploma tempered the existing centralization with a measure of federalism, and absolutism was tempered by the semblance of constitutionalism. On the whole, the political system of the empire was very frugally 'reformed'. As a result, the October Diploma never lived up to the hopes attached to it by the court. Hungarian public opinion refused to accept measures contrary to the constitution of 1848 and far below the minimum demands of the nation. There were fierce demonstrations in the streets of Pest, and protests were made in the revived county assemblies. Owing to its federal nature, the Diploma was adversely received by the centralist bureaucracy and the constitutionalist Austrian bourgeoisie. Neither Viennese nor foreign capitalists had much confidence in the constitutional consolidation of the Monarchy.

Soon, however, new winds were blowing in Vienna. Anton Schmerling, known to be a constitutional centralist, was appointed minister of state, and the banker Baron Rothschild was brought into the constitutional supervision of finances. The change of direction was made official by the imperial decree of 26 February 1861. The February Patent, in the spirit of centralism, increased the powers of the *Reichsrat* at the expense of the provincial assemblies. The provincial statutes appended to the Patent, furthermore, introduced a peculiar system of their own; voters selected in accordance with a high property qualification were divided into four electoral curias based on social rank and place of residence. The Schmerling electoral system secured the parlia-



mentary hegemony of the big landowners and big bourgeoisie, and of the Austro-Germans, for the next half century.

The new arrangement produced even greater dissatisfaction among the Hungarian public, which had been keyed up by the parliamentary elections. Electoral meetings and newly-elected deputies declared the February Patent illegal, and the majority of them stood firm by the constitution of 1848. In the spring of 1861, the Hungarian ruling classes arrived at a crossroads with regard to future policy.

The great majority of liberal politicians were well aware that there was an organic link between the solution of the agrarian and nationality questions and the regaining of constitutional independence. Many of them were inclined to hack the proposal to abolish the 'conditions akin to statute labour' through fair and equitable compensation financed partly by the state and partly by the peasants, and they accordingly endeavoured to soothe and win over the peasants. When it came to putting the proposal into practice, however, most landowners found themselves face to face with the concrete demands of the peasants. At several places actual clashes occurred between peasants who seized land by force and landowners who enjoyed the support of the imperial authorities. A conference, held in February 1861, recognized the Decree of 1853 as the legal basis for the solution of the agrarian question. The majority of the counties adhered to this and rejected the petitions of peasants who asked for the injurious measures and decisions to be revoked. The divergence between the interests of the landowners and peasants in the land question hindered the acceptance of a new 'union of interests' as a programme of principle, and even more its realization in practice.

With the failure of the War of Independence and with the introduction of absolutism, Hungarian liberal politicians realized that in the nationality question the constitution of 1848 was both outdated and illiberal. During the period of neo-absolutism they showed readiness to look for ways of reconciling rather than repressing the non-Hungarian population of the country.

There were favourable signs in the situation of the day. Reactionary measures were equally injurious to the Hungarians and to the other peoples of the empire. Ferenc Pulszky's witty sarcasm hit home when he pointed out that the government was offering the national minorities as a reward the same thing that had been meted out as punishment to the Hungarians. At that time there were many signs indicating that a *rapprochement* between the Hungarians and the nationalities was on the way, a desire for co-operation based on recent experiences. The leaders of the emigration laid great stress on a peaceful, democratic

solution of the nationality question. As early as 1849 László Telcki insisted on an agreement based on broad autonomy. Discussions based on his progressive ideas were held with the exiled leaders of the neighbouring peoples, and contact was established with the Serbian and Rumanian princes. Kossuth's draft constitution of his Kútahia exile, taking as the basis the nationality law of July 1849, guaranteed autonomy in the counties with non-Hungarian majorities and a separate government and independent parliament to Croatia. In the course of the discussions of 1859 it was agreed that should independence be given to Hungary, the status of Transylvania would be decided by plebiscite. The leaders of the emigration encouraged their followers at home, through their programme, advice and material support, to substantiate their solidarity with concrete agreements and not just empty catch-phrases of fraternity.

Most of the leaders of the national minorities were not averse to the idea of an agreement. They were on the side of the Hungarians in boycotting absolutist rule, and they took part in the newly organized life of the counties. They expected the Hungarian ruling classes to recognize the rights of the other nationalities and to grant adequate autonomy within the frame of the Hungarian state. The Croatian parliament refused to be represented in the *Reichsrat*, and in the event of the union of Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Fiume and the Mura region into an autonomous Croatia territory they would have been willing to form a close alliance with Hungary. The Rumanians and Saxons of Transylvania, in addition to a guarantee of national equality, desired to settle the question of Transylvania's union with Hungary in a parliament to be convened under a new election law. The Serbs and Slovaks demanded national autonomy while recognizing the subjection of their autonomous bodies to the sovereignty of the Hungarian parliament and government.

The *rapprochement* between the Hungarian exiles and the leaders of the various national movements furnished a suitable basis on which to negotiate an agreement based on a compromise between conflicting national interests. Kossuth's programme, however, had no popular support at home. The Hungarian ruling class—although quite a few of its liberal representatives recognized the necessity for a reasonable settlement and were willing to make certain concessions—rigidly rejected the idea of autonomy for the nationalities. They insisted on 'territorial and political integrity' and the principle of 'a unitary Hungarian political nation', and were ready to accept the linguistic and political rights of the nationalities only on such a basis, meaning the use of the national languages only in the lower grades of public administra-



tion and education and in church life. In practice, especially in the non-Hungarian regions, impatient nationalism flared up once again. The divergence between the principle of 'territorial and political integrity', expressing the demand for Hungarian supremacy, and autonomy, guaranteeing national equality, hindered any settlement.

The Hungarian ruling class seemed to be unified and intransigent only in one respect, its determination to regain the independence it had been robbed of. The uncurtailed restitution of the 1848 constitution, the *restitutio in integrum*, and '1848 without concessions' became the generally accepted popular slogans of Hungarian public opinion. This national intransigence, however, suffered from severe anaemia: by the 1848 constitution was meant the enforcement of the laws codified in the spring of 1848—without the social basis and programme that had achieved constitutional independence.

Even in 1848 the concept of modern transformation was not limited to setting up an independent Hungarian government and declaring the personal union with Austria, but further included social progress and the liberation of the serfs. This would have necessarily entailed national equality and the settlement of the nationality question. After a lapse of twelve years it was precisely the democratic development of the ideas of 1848 and a new 'union of interests' with the people and the nationalities that could have recreated the progressive spirit of 1848.

Their position as landowners and their nationalist aspirations precluded the possibility of the Hungarian ruling class establishing common cause in 1860-61 with both Hungarian and non-Hungarian forces in Hungary. Thus the programme for the re-establishment of the 1848 constitution was limited to achieving Hungarian independence and securing the national and class rule of the nobility; in other words, the spirit of 1848 was narrowed down to a programme of strict constitutionalism. And this platform of strict constitutionalism was not large enough for a successful struggle against absolutism, not even for a compromise on the basis of the 1848 constitution.

This attitude was rendered rather dubious by the international situation as well. The first great phase in the unification of Italy was over. In February 1861, the Kingdom of Italy was proclaimed in Turin. Only Rome and Venice still lay outside its confines. No military action was to be expected in Italy. The emperor of the French, owing to 'subversive' plots, had angrily turned his back on the Italian national movement, and indirectly on the Hungarian, too. The liberal-minded British government, as soon as its 'favourite' Austria was involved, stated with strict conservatism that the Habsburg Empire was indis-

pensable from the point of view of the balance of power in Europe. The great hopes of 1859-60 dwindled away. Kossuth could send nothing but encouraging messages. Klapka's rifles were confiscated in Rumania, Garibaldi had retired to Caprera, planning an expedition not to Hungary but to Rome. The cause of Hungary was abandoned, and the country could only fall back upon its own resources.

### The Parliament of 1861

It was in this situation that parliament opened its session on 2 April 1861. Eighty per cent of the new members came from the ranks of the landed nobility and the intelligentsia of noble origin, the partisans of 1848. The first weeks were spent on formalities connected with the agenda, and in the course of private discussions two opposing trends emerged. The liberal aristocrats supporting Deák and the right wing of the nobility held the opinion that Francis Joseph, if not legally, was *de facto* ruler of the country. Consequently, the royal message sent to the parliament was to be reciprocated by the customary address of parliament listing the demands of the nation. They formed the so-called 'Address Party'. The other faction, comprising all the varied left-wing members of the nobility, did not recognize Francis Joseph as ruler and consequently wished to state its views only in the form of a parliamentary resolution. The acknowledged leader of this faction—known as the 'Resolution Party'—was László Teleki.

How did one of the leaders of the emigration, a member of the Hungarian National Directorate, come into the forefront of political life in Hungary at this juncture? The careless Teleki had been captured by the Saxon police in Dresden in December 1860 and handed over to Austria. After he had served a short term of imprisonment, Francis Joseph, who preferred to conciliate rather than provoke Hungarian public opinion, released him, on condition that he should keep aloof from politics. Teleki, returned home, enjoyed immense popularity. As a member of the Upper House he received an invitation to attend parliament, and thinking himself no longer obliged to keep his promise, he stood for election.

Teleki remained true to his conceptions of 1848; and he professed the necessity of enlarging the democratic basis of 1848. He soon came to realize, however, that his growing party did not represent increasing resistance, because the bulk of the ruling nobility had abandoned the conceptions of 1848, paying only lip-service at most to the policy of the emigration, but rejecting its essence, waiting only for a favourable

wind to carry their ship into the harbour of peaceful settlement. Teleki himself was conscious of the fact that conditions for a new revolution and armed uprising did not exist. But he continued to profess that by augmenting the accomplishments of 1848, by joining forces with the people and the national minorities, the nation would overcome absolutist rule and liberate itself from every form of oppression. His fellow leaders and supporters, nevertheless, did not share these views. Teleki was faced by the dreadful dilemma of having to choose between isolation and compromise. This was presumably why he took his own life at dawn of 8 May, a few hours before the opening of the parliamentary debate.

Teleki's death plunged the nation into mourning, and the parliament began debate on Deák's draft address to the monarch only after the days of mourning had passed. Deák's proposal recognized the Pragmatic Sanction as the legal basis of Habsburg rule and of the defence community formed by the lands belonging to the House of Habsburg, but it stressed at the same time Hungary's independence, which, after many antecedents, had been confirmed by the legislation of 1848. With splendid reasoning Deák showed that both the October Diploma and the February Patent were at variance with the constitution of the country, contradictory in themselves and unacceptable to Hungary. He pointed out that Hungary's independence did not run counter to the security and great-power status of the empire. But restitution of the 1848 constitution was the precondition of any agreement. During a debate lasting for several weeks, the 'Resolution Party' stuck to its earlier viewpoint, to be sure, but it did not strive very energetically to carry it into effect. The new leadership (Kálmán Tisza, Kálmán Ghyczy, Baron Frigyes Podmaniczky), as well as the majority of the party, was unwilling to accept either the responsibility for an open breach or the unpopularity of a compromise and was, therefore, not very eager for the victory of its own viewpoint. When the division came, Deák's motion was carried by a narrow majority. The address was twice returned by the ruler on the grounds that the legislation of 1848 did not ensure adequate harmony between the interests of the empire and the Hungarian constitution, but that the October Diploma and the February Patent were meant to provide this. With hypocritical liberality he also adduced in his defence the need for a better understanding of the rights of the nationalities. This was a blow at the most vulnerable point of Hungarian politics. Parliament did, in fact, appoint a committee with a Hungarian majority to prepare the draft of a nationality law, but this committee did not accept the demands for national autonomy. In keeping with the views of Deák and Eötvös, the

committee took up its position on the basic principles of 'the unitary Hungarian political nation' and 'the unitary state' within which, however, extensive language and civil rights were to be granted to the nationalities.

With the rejection of the addresses of parliament, the possibility of further discussions was also aborted. There was no other solution for either side but to dissolve parliament, which followed on 22 August. The leaders of the nobility had not succeeded in finding a way out, because they were shut off from below by their own will and from above by the will of Vienna. There was nothing else left to them but solemn protest, the self-righteous halo of sticking to their legal position, and the weapon dictated by their isolation: renewed passive resistance. Deák wound up the debate with the following classical peroration: 'The nation will suffer if it has to... It will endure without despair, as its ancestors patiently endured and suffered, to defend their rights; for whatever is lost through force may be retrieved through patience and good fortune, but what we surrender ourselves... it is difficult and ever doubtful whether it can be regained.'

#### New Forms of Absolutism: the Provisorium

The parliament took note of its dissolution with a feeble 'remonstrance', and most of the counties satisfied themselves with lodging a formal protest. Only the more radical counties dared to oppose the government actively by refusing to collect taxes, conscript recruits or heed its decrees. Within a short time the government again liquidated the self-government of the counties and towns. The administrative scheme of this new version of absolutism was established by a provisional regulation or *provisorium* (hence the name of the ensuing four-year period). The country was once more ruled by a governor-general, the counties by royal commissioners or an appointed lord lieutenant. A strict censorship and martial law were re-introduced, and a host of gendarmes and police agents descended on the country. Nevertheless, neither side believed that this absolutism, again resting solely on force, could last; and as the term itself indicates, it was regarded as more or less a provisional state of affairs.

Most of the leading core of the nobility settled down to wait. There was no longer any question of serious resistance. Only in 1863-4 were there two isolated, secret movements, disavowed even by their leaders. The outcome of passive resistance was already clear in 1860-1. At this crossroads it was brought home to the leading strata, even to the

bulk of those who still believed in the illusion of 1848, that passive resistance in the long run was not practical: it became obvious that in the chronic crisis of absolutism, sooner or later, a situation would present itself when they would have to put aside passivity and fight or give up resistance and come to an agreement. The majority preferred the latter course. They were prompted by the economic situation, both those who were benefiting from the capitalist boom and yearning for political stability, and those who desired to share in the proceeds of the boom. This choice was made preferable by the Austrian bank loans which were now more accessible to the big landowners and, equally as much, by the lack of credit pressing the great mass who were deeply in debt, crowned by the famines of a few years of catastrophic harvests. They were induced to make this choice by the recurrent peasant movements and by the persistent claims of the nationalities, which threatened the noble-national hegemony. They were cautioned by the suppression of the Polish uprising of 1863-4, by the menacing spectre of the expansion of Czarist Russia and the new proof of her brutal methods of oppression. And they were pushed towards this choice also by the democratic policies of the much-reduced emigration.

Kossuth, his confidence in the aid of foreign powers shattered, produced a new conception of how to gain independence. He turned his attention to the nationality question and to the existing bad relations between Hungary and her neighbours. Summing up the ideas of fellow exiles, he outlined in 1862 his plan for a Danubian Confederation. Kossuth saw the pledge of the future in an anti-Habsburg federation of Hungary, Croatia, Serbia and Rumania (and possibly, depending on a plebiscite, independent Transylvania). In this federation foreign affairs, war and commerce would be of common concern, while in all other matters each country would retain its internal autonomy, based on democratic principles. A federal council, filling the role of common parliament, would meet every year in another capital to decide common affairs.

The external and internal political preconditions for a federation of this kind were non-existent in the 1860s. The leaders and the public opinion of the respective countries were averse to the idea of federation. This in itself progressive plan was entirely utopian in that period. It was not, however, the concrete blueprint for federation that was the essence of the scheme but the recognition of the common national interests and of the need for solidarity of the Hungarians and the neighbouring peoples. If the plan was disregarded, Kossuth warned the nation, 'a long line of future generations, either in German bondage

or torn asunder by the assaults of the awakening nationalities, will keep in belated and helpless grief over the squandered opportunity for the rebirth of the Hungarian nation'.

Both Kossuth's prophetic warnings and his plan for confederation were rejected by the leading sections of the nobility, not because of their utopian nature, but because of their conciliatoriness, which came near to renouncing Hungarian supremacy and the territorial integrity of the country. According to their reasoning, if even Kossuth believed that an independent Hungary could not survive on her own, then the best thing to do was to come to terms with the Habsburgs, much rather than with the nationalities. They would rather go to Vienna than to 'the Balkans'. The landed nobility and the majority of the intelligentsia regarded a bargain with Vienna as the lesser evil. Thus even Kossuth's conception of a democratic nationality policy led them rather towards compromise with Vienna than towards resistance based on an association with the neighbouring countries.

And last but not least the necessity for a compromise was supported by the turn of international events. The unification of Italy had for all practical purposes been completed, and Napoleon III was no longer cast as the liberator of the oppressed peoples of Central and Eastern Europe. Ever since the early 1860s, Britain, under both the Palmerston and the Russell governments, had repeatedly and emphatically advised Austria to come to peaceful terms with the Italians externally and the Hungarians internally, at the same time pointing out on each occasion that it regarded the existence of Austria as indispensable for peace and the balance of power in Europe.

In the mid-1860s, the focus of international—and Hungarian—interest moved from the unification of Italy to the matter of German unity. Here the effect on Hungary was completely different: in the German question Hungarian liberal politicians expected and desired Austria's victory and continued existence. The great majority of the Hungarian ruling class—in spite of what has been said in Hungarian and German historiography in the past—did not sympathize with Prussia and the programme of unification conceived by Bismarck. They disapproved of Bismarck's conservatism and absolutist methods of government and were afraid of his suspected plans for annexation and especially his collaboration with Russia. Ever since the Reform Era the foreign policy of the Hungarian ruling classes had been determined by the fear of 'Pan-Slavism' and the expansion of Czarist Russia; the intervention of 1849 was still fresh in their minds, and the brutal suppression of the 1863 Polish insurrection served as a timely reminder of it.

A German unification brought about under Austrian leadership produced a glimmer of hope for a personal union, whereas one resulting from Prussian-Russian collaboration caused the liberal politicians of the Hungarian ruling class serious apprehension and a sense of danger, conjuring up the possibility of annihilation between the two reactionary empires. Deák questioned whether an independent Hungary could survive 'wedged as it is between the mighty Russian and German empires'. It seemed safer to stay within the framework of the Monarchy and to work out a compromise between the empire's vital interests and the demands of its great-power status on the one hand, and the need for a return to the 1848 constitution on the other.

### Preparations for the Compromise

These external and internal developments also made the other side, i.e. the imperial court and the leaders of the German liberal movement, readier to come to terms. A further incentive was the series of failures suffered by the Schmerling government in inaugurating an era of constitutional government. The government failed to win over the Hungarians for the constitution of the empire and was unable to force it upon them from above. In 1863 the Czechs, and later on the Poles, too, went into opposition. The Great-German foreign policy also met with failure. At the *Fürstentag* held in 1863 in Frankfurt, Austria could not establish its predominance in Germany. In the Schleswig-Holstein war the following year the supremacy of Prussia was clearly demonstrated. The Schmerling government was furthermore beset by financial troubles, and as a result of absolutist methods of government, by the hostility of the leading German liberal personalities as well. The view that constitutionalism could not develop in Austria as long as absolutism ruled in Hungary was gaining ground. A growing number of people came out for a compromise with the Hungarians. In the autumn of 1864 the *Verfassungspartei* (the Austro-German liberal constitution party) turned against the government, whereupon Schmerling's position became extremely precarious.

Alarmed by difficulties, which instead of lessening became more and more insurmountable, Francis Joseph once again turned towards Pest-Buda. Through intermediaries he made contact with Deák at the end of 1864. Informatory talks started in a semi-official form, through private channels. Early in 1865 the government lessened its absolutist rule and made significant concessions, among other things deciding to convene the Hungarian parliament. Thus it was not without ante-

cedents that Deák's 'Easter article' was written, which, without going into details, merely recorded the turn of events and stressed its mutuality.

Deák voiced his views at the most opportune moment. His famous 'Easter article' appeared in *Pesti Napló* (Pest Journal) on 16 April 1865. Although it seemed to repeat the 1861 viewpoint, those who could read between the lines noticed some differences and a certain flexibility. Deák insisted that no one desired to undermine the solid foundations of the empire, but within its framework 'the basic laws of the Hungarian constitution should be given adequate scope'. From Hungary's constitutional laws 'it would be neither just nor expedient to take away more than absolutely necessary to ensure the firm continuation of the empire'. Words like 'expedient' and 'take away' indicated a readiness to bargain. The subsequent 'May letters' soon revealed to the public the essence of Deák's concessions: the recognition of so-called 'common affairs'. This had been missing in the constitution of 1848.

Vienna gave a favourable reception to the proposals. Schmerling, outvoted in the *Reichsrat*, was forced to resign, and Count Belcredi, who had conservative federalist leanings, was appointed prime minister. The February Patent was repealed. In Hungary constitutional life was in due course partially re-established, and at the end of the year a new parliament was convened. The great majority of the members professed to follow Deák, meaning loyalty to the idea of compromise. Even the left-centre (the former 'Resolution Party'), under Kálmán Tisza, recognized the necessity of compromise and disagreed with the Deák party only over the handling of common affairs. Only the small group headed by the radical László Böszörményi (the extreme left) insisted on the inviolability of the 1848 constitution and fought for it.

In the spring of 1866 parliament appointed a committee of 67 members which delegated from its ranks a sub-committee of 15 to work out, under the chairmanship of Gyula Andrássy, a proposal for the management of common affairs, the basic issue of the Compromise. The debates dragged on until June, when they were temporarily suspended because of the outbreak of the Austro-Prussian war.

### The War of 1866. New Crisis of the Monarchy

Bismarck had for years been deliberately edging the struggle for supremacy in Germany towards an armed conflict. In the end it was Austria that declared war in order to prevent her exclusion from the German Confederation. The war did not last long. The Prussian troops which occupied Saxony invaded the empire, by way of Bohemia, at the end of June. On 3 July, at Königgrätz (Sadova) a decisive blow was inflicted on the incompetently commanded Austrian army. An episode of the war worth mentioning from the Hungarian angle was the attempt of the emigration, which had allied with Bismarck, to deploy in Hungary an exile legion organized by Klapka. The legion advanced as far as the western Carpathians but found no support there, and the German 'ally' soon dropped the diversionary manoeuvre, planned only for tactical reasons. After Königgrätz, Austria was obliged to make peace, achieved at the expense of resigning all her claims and rights in Germany, ceding Venice to Italy, and the payment of several million florins in war damages.

It was not only the war and the question of supremacy in Germany which was decided at Königgrätz, but also the fate of the Monarchy. The defeat brought the ruling circles of the empire into such straits that they could extricate themselves with the least sacrifice only by compromise with the Hungarians, and the renunciation of absolutist government in a unitary and centralized empire. Francis Joseph only came to this decision after much trial and error; it was not easy for him to entrust the transformation of his empire to his enemies of 1848, the Austro-German liberals and the unreliable Hungarian 'rebels', against the conservative aristocracy and the Austro-Slavs who were closer to his heart. He only accepted the agreement, so contrary to the traditions of the dynasty and its principles, because he had come to the conclusion that only by relying on the Germans and Hungarians could he preserve the might of his dynasty and the great-power status of the empire, and only through this could he have a chance to revenge himself on the Prussians.

This involuntary insight was founded on considerations of *Realpolitik*. It is an indisputable fact that at this stage of bourgeois transformation the Slavic peoples were materially, militarily and politically weak. Their leaders belonged to or supported mostly conservative movements. Even their democratic movements awaited the recognition of their national rights from above, from the aristocracy and the Habsburg dynasty. The Germans and Hungarians, on the other hand,

despite—or perhaps because of—the fact that they had actively fought for their programmes in 1848, and despite the fact that they were liberals—or because of it—proved strong enough to maintain and renew the Monarchy, and within its confines their own rule. The national aspirations and federative schemes of the Slavs and other oppressed peoples, and likewise Kossuth's idea of independence and his confederation plan, despite the truth of their principles and the later vindication of these—or perhaps just because of this—were still unrealistic or utopian in the 1860s.

The preservation of the disposition of power was of great importance for the Austro-German ruling classes as well. The Austro-German liberals were inclined to come to terms with the Hungarians during the crisis at the beginning of the 1860s, and some of their left-wing politicians were in contact with the members of the Deák party. However, by themselves they were unable to resolve the inner conflict of the German-liberal movement between *Reichseinheit* (unity of the Habsburg Empire) and liberal equality. The year 1866 was a turning-point in this respect, too; having been squeezed out of Germany they had to find the guarantee of power within the Monarchy alone. This is why they accepted in 1866–7 the basic principles of the Compromise, which replaced the loss of *Reichseinheit* and the leading role in Germany with the gain of constitutionalism, and which offered guarantees against 'the dangers of federalism and Slavism'.

### The Compromise of 1867

The change in the views of the ruling circles was reflected in the appointment of Baron Ferdinand Beust, former prime minister of Saxony, as minister of foreign affairs. Beust weighed the balance of forces in a realistic manner. He regarded the Compromise as indispensable to the Monarchy's great-power status and a successful foreign policy and acted as a successful mediator between the monarch, the *Verfassungspartei* and the leaders of the Deák party.

The Hungarian parliament continued the negotiations on the same basis even after the defeat at Königgrätz. At the outbreak of the war it was Deák himself who put forward a motion for the adjournment of parliament. Deák and his followers, although they were probably aware that a Prussian victory would remove otherwise insurmountable obstacles hindering agreement, inevitably kept considerations of foreign policy uppermost in their minds and followed the Prussian advance with alarm and anxiety. They hoped for an Austrian victory or



at least that Austria would remain intact. Their loyalty met with appreciation during the negotiation, which progressed slowly after the end of the war. At the end of 1866 and early in 1867, after protracted wrangles, the Hungarian leaders made an agreement with Beust and then with the ruler as to the basic principles for the reorganization of the Monarchy, and later the details of the new constitutional and economic relations between Austria and Hungary. On 17 February 1867, Francis Joseph appointed the government responsible for Hungary, which, since Deák refused to accept either rank or office, was headed by Gyula Andrassy. On 29 May the Hungarian parliament ratified the Act of Compromise.

Act XII of 1867, taking the Pragmatic Sanction as its point of departure, on the one hand made clear the independence of Hungary in internal affairs, on the other hand recognized her indissoluble community with the other lands of the ruling house and, in consequence of this, the joint character of foreign affairs, defence and the finances serving to defray the expenses of these. Ministers-in-common were to be responsible to a committee consisting of 60 delegates from each parliament. The delegations appointed to discuss parliamentary matters in common met separately and only came together to bridge differences of opinion, which were resolved by simple voting. Two special parliamentary committees decided from time to time on the ratio (or quota) in which Austria and Hungary were to share the expenses of common affairs. In the first decade the ratio was 70:30 respectively. A separate act dealt with the economic relations between the two parts of the empire. Hungary entered into a customs union with Austria, renewable every ten years, and agreed on bank-notes to be issued in common and on common commodity and currency regulations.

With the Compromise the former Austrian Empire became the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, consisting of two formally independent countries, each with a government responsible to its own parliament and with its own state apparatus, but having the same ruler, joint armed forces and representation abroad. In foreign affairs the Dual Monarchy counted as a unitary state. This complicated, cumbersome state apparatus was born from a compromise of the many divergent and conflicting interests which formed the basis of the system.

The Compromise did not mean merely the re-arrangement of the constitutional relationship between Austria and Hungary, but was at the same time a closing act in the period of bourgeois revolutions. It provided, after the revolutionary impetus of 1848 and the failure of neo-absolutism, for an anti-democratic solution to the questions of

bourgeois transformation. The emperor, in order to retain his empire, gave his consent to moderate constitutional limitations on his unlimited power. The Austrian ruling circles abandoned the idea of the unitary state in order to keep hold of the entire state, in order to preserve centralization at least in the Cisleithanian\* half of the empire. The Hungarian landowning class turned their backs on the revolutionary achievements of 1848 in order to retain their leading role, economically and politically, in the face of the rising middle class, and their rule over the Hungarian people and the other nationalities. The new system did not alter, indeed reinforced, national oppression, even if this was now divided 'more fairly' between the Austrians and the Hungarians. The system of big estates was not weakened but consolidated, and the remnants of feudalism were preserved within the framework of capitalism, the remnants of absolutism, wrapped in the forms of constitutionalism. Thus, at the favourable historical juncture the Compromise merely closed an era without really having accomplished the bourgeois revolution or solved its basic problems.

In the given historical circumstances this denouement was logical, and the Compromise realistic. Both internal and external conditions were unfavourable in the 1860s for the successful termination of the revolution, for the democratic extension of the abolition of serfdom and a democratic solution of the nationality question. The international conflicts immediately threatening the existence of the Habsburg Empire were solved (at a cost to the Monarchy but without destroying it) with the methods of conservative great-power politics. The Powers, especially Britain, France and Bismarck's Prussia, supported the maintenance of the Monarchy. And, objectively, the Dual Monarchy offered to the peoples living within its framework better opportunities for economic and political progress under the conditions of East Central Europe than did the autocratic Czarist Russia, whose expansion was, not without reason, feared by the liberal and democratic public opinion of the period.

It was in vain, therefore, that Kossuth laid before the Hungarian political leadership the dangers latent in the Compromise, which, he wrote, 'makes enemies both of our eastern and western neighbours, makes impossible the solution of the internal nationality question and the chances of understanding with Croatia, and, in the obviously approaching European conflicts, makes Hungary the target of rival ambitions'. It was in vain that he warned them that Hungary should offer itself as the pyre on which 'history will burn the Austrian eagle'. It was

\* In general usage 'Cisleithania' was a rough abbreviation for 'the realms and lands represented in the Reichsrat'.



in vain that he implored Deák not to carry the nation to the point where 'it could no longer be master of its future' if objective historical circumstances had made the revolutionary struggle hopeless and passive resistance futile. The majority of the ruling class desired, not to secede but to integrate itself, within a constitutional framework, into the Monarchy, the great power which offered them protection.

Deák expressed his point of view quite clearly—as if carrying on a polemic with Kossuth—during his defence of the Act of Compromise. After 1849, under the autocracy, he said, three courses had been open to us: either to obtain our rights by armed struggle, or wait for good fortune, or come to terms. Arms and revolution are dubious means even when there is a prospect of success; to rely for future progress on uncertain events, and in the meantime let the strength, welfare, faith and hope of the nation wither away: this would have been wrong and harmful. So only the third course remained, to convince the ruler and impartial public opinion that the restoration of the Hungarian constitution could be consistent with the security and maintenance of the empire. The deeper the crisis of the empire became, the more the Hungarian ruling classes wished to reach an agreement. For they believed that 'disintegration would not benefit us'; on the contrary, 'we would be considered raw material, to be used in the erection of other buildings'.

If the opportunity and the readiness alike were lacking for secession, then a compromise had to be reached. To achieve a compromise, nevertheless, concession had to be made, even at the expense of complete sovereignty.

Following the suppression of the revolution, the ruling classes no longer had need of 1848 or the dethroner Kossuth; they wanted 1867 and a Francis Joseph now become amenable to constitutional rule. Thus it came about on 8 June 1867 that, regardless of the past and heedless of the future, amidst dazzling splendour, the traditional rites and prayers of thanksgiving, Francis Joseph, showing off in a Hungarian general's uniform, and his popular consort Elizabeth, were crowned king and queen of Hungary.

*Chapter VII*

THE DUAL MONARCHY  
(1867–1918)

# 1. THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN MONARCHY (1867-1890)

## The Consolidation of the Dualist System

The Compromise for a time ended the long crisis of the empire: the international position and inner stability of the Monarchy were restored. A favourable international situation, underpinned by the ascending, founding and accumulating stage of capitalism, promoted, for a few decades, the peaceful development of the empire and the progress of modern civilization. This was the 'peaceful golden age', remembered with nostalgia by the impoverished generation following the First World War.

A basic condition of the Compromise was the introduction of constitutionalism throughout the Monarchy. The western part of the empire (Austria or Cisleithania) was divided into 16 provinces, with separate provincial assemblies, limited autonomy and appointed governors. The functions of the Austrian parliament were regulated by the constitution of 1861. The members of the provincial assemblies were elected, on the basis of a high property qualification, by four curias (big landowners, chambers of commerce and industry, cities and rural communes) with a fixed number of electors. Until 1873 the representatives to the central parliament, the *Reichsrat*, were chosen by the provincial assemblies; afterwards they, too, were elected directly, in accordance with the curia system. The representatives formed parties, in part based on political ideas and programmes, in part according to nationality.

During the decade immediately following the Compromise, the liberal constitution party, representing the Austrian bourgeoisie, with its 'bourgeois government' (*Bürgerministerium*) was in power.

The eastern part of the empire (Hungary or Transleithania), though also a multinational country, formed a single constitutional unit. Transylvania was again merged into Hungary, and the separate status of the military frontier zone was gradually liquidated. A Croatian-Hungarian Compromise enacted in 1868 made Croatia 'an associate country under the Crown of St. Stephen'; Croatia and Slavonia were to enjoy limited provincial autonomy. The Croatian parliament and the

*bán* (viceroy) enjoyed autonomy only in the sphere of internal affairs, religion, education and justice; other branches of government constituted 'common' affairs with Hungary. For the purpose of formal constitutional representation in the latter, Croatia and Slavonia had a minister in the Hungarian cabinet and 40 members in the Hungarian parliament. Dalmatia and Fiume were not joined to Croatia. This very restricted 'compromise' did not meet with the approval of the Croatian leaders and people and was only forced on them after years of resistance.

The other peoples of Hungary did not receive even limited autonomy. The so-called Nationality Act of 1868 declared Hungary to be a 'unitary national state', and its inhabitants members of the 'unitary Hungarian political nation', taking note at most only of 'Hungarian citizens speaking different languages'. This politico-legal fiction disregarding the national existence of the non-Hungarian peoples remained till the dissolution of the Monarchy the cornerstone of Hungarian nationalism, defended with every available means and proclaimed as holy dogma. The nationalism of the Compromise era was, however, still liberal. The Nationality Act declared the civil equality of all nationalities and allowed the free use of their languages in the lower instances of administration and justice, and in primary and secondary schools; it also guaranteed in principle the right of association and the autonomy of their churches.

Although the Act can be called liberal under the contemporary conditions of East Central Europe, the nationalities still protested against it at the time because of its refusal to recognize their national identities and their autonomy. Later on they would have accepted the Act as a basis of negotiations, but by that time the Hungarian governments denied not only the spirit of the Act but also kept its letter less and less. The nationalities, who made up about half the population of the country, were in practice squeezed out of its political life, having only 5 per cent representation in parliament, and 10 per cent in the state administrative apparatus. Constitutionalism safeguarded the supremacy of the Austrian and Hungarian ruling classes in both parts of the Monarchy. In addition, a limited autonomy was granted to the Poles and Croats, and the Czechs were accorded a certain influence in economic and cultural life. There developed in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy a hierarchy of national dependence, with the Austro-Germans on top, then the Hungarians, and at the bottom the Rumanians, Slovaks and Ukrainians. On the other hand, the Monarchy did provide for each of its peoples possibilities for development and a legal order relatively advanced for the East Central Europe of that

time. The constitutional legal order was strongly undermined, however, by the gradual decay of liberalism and the constant abuses of the ruling circles and the bureaucracy. Constitutionalism was also hampered by the power of the monarch, who retained the ultimate direction of foreign affairs and unlimited control of the army. He had to approve bills before they could be submitted to parliament (*Vorsanktionierung*) and to decide in matters of contention between the two governments. Article 14 of the Austrian constitution even gave the ruler the right to govern with emergency decrees.

After the Compromise, the new political system of dualism did not get under way without protest. The oppressed nations struggled for equality. The Czechs called for a triple monarchy. Court circles, too, for a good while looked upon the Compromise as a provisional measure. The court, the leaders of the army and some representatives of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie still pursued the illusion of a *gross-deutsche* foreign policy and centralist domestic policy; they worked for retaliation against Prussia. At the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, of 1870 this unrealistic but quite influential clique even had hopes of regaining Austria's supremacy in Germany and restoring the unitary empire.

When the war broke out the court party was preparing for military revenge; Beust suggested waiting for the victory of the French, which seemed to him inevitable, and then regaining the Austrian positions in Germany mainly through diplomatic means; Andrassy advocated strict neutrality and preparation for an armed intervention against Russia. A meeting of the Crown Council on 18 July 1870 led to a compromise between the opposing views under which the Monarchy for the time being maintained and declared its neutrality, but at the same time began to rearm, preparing for a possibility of military intervention. Wishful thoughts of revenge in court circles, however, were finally shattered at Sedan, with the defeat of the French Emperor Napoleon III.

Parallel to the attempt at a centralist restoration, a federalist movement also emerged. The Austro-Hungarian Compromise was not accepted by the Czech representatives, who boycotted the *Reichsrat* in protest. Their resistance produced wide echoes in Bohemia and among other Slavic peoples. As part of an effort to appease them Count Hohenwart, who had federalist leanings, was appointed prime minister of Austria in February 1871. The Hohenwart government, which even included Czech ministers, prepared 'fundamental articles of law' with regard to the Czech lands, similar in content to the 1867 Compromise. According to these, the Dual Monarchy would have been con-

verted into a triple monarchy, a step towards further federalist changes and the realization of national equality. The plan, however, was frustrated in its initial stages by the determined opposition of the Austro-German ruling classes and the Hungarian government.

The failure of centralist and federalist attempts within the empire, the traditional good relations with Britain and the emerging good relations with Germany in foreign policy helped consolidate the dualist system. There still remained, however, its consolidation in Hungary, for it had not met with the unanimous approval of all political circles. In point of fact, the Compromise met with very strong and widespread oppositionary sentiments, and in places outright resistance. The system of 1867 needed to find a solid basis among a population composed mainly of peasants, multinational in character, and in a country where public opinion had strong feelings about 1848.

The task fell to the government which assumed office in 1867. It included a number of popular politicians from the ruling classes. Its premier, Count Gyula Andrássy, the heir of an illustrious aristocratic family with vast estates, was a talented and brilliant politician. Andrássy's political reputation was enhanced by his participation in the War of Independence and his years in exile, but his 'conversion' and repeated demonstrations of his loyalty had rendered him acceptable to the court as well. Other outstanding members of the cabinet were the progressive writer and liberal-minded politician whose career had followed a course similar to Andrássy's, Baron József Eötvös, now minister of religion and education, Boldizsár Horvát, the minister of justice, and Menyhért Lónyay, the minister of finance. The government was supported by the landed aristocracy, those better-off gentry who approved of the 1867 Compromise, and the upper bourgeoisie. These forces were represented by the Deák party, the government party, which had a two-thirds majority in parliament. The government party's many factions, ranging from the former 'Old Conservatives' to the one-time liberal centralists, were loosely united by the prestige of Deák and by the new system.

The main strength of the opposition was represented by about 100 members of the 'Left-Centre' party. There were some big landowners among them, too, notably the leader of the party himself, Kálmán Tisza, a member of the gentry who was making the tortuous journey from revolutionary and follower of the conceptions of Kossuth to future prime minister. The character of the party, nevertheless, was determined by the oppositional middle and lower gentry and noble intelligentsia. The typical party of the gentry accepted the essence of the Compromise but not its form, the handling of joint affairs, and it

did not surrender its claim to a leading role to the aristocracy. Their opposition aimed therefore at a 'better' compromise and the recovery of lost leadership.

The very wide camp of landowners, intellectuals, bourgeoisie and peasants dissatisfied with the Compromise was represented in parliament only by a small, twenty-member group of the 'Extreme-Left'. The 1848 radicals, the adherents of Kossuth, belonged to this group, and their strength was augmented by the support of the masses. The members of the Extreme-Left, József Madarász, Dániel Irányi and László Böszörményi, on the advice of Kossuth, had consciously stirred up and organized popular-national resistance in the veterans' associations and later in the democratic circles. The veterans' associations, established in 1861, fostered the spirit of 1848, and in 1867 they were opposed to the Compromise. It was in vain that Klapka and Türr, who returned to Hungary from exile and turned Deák adherents, threw into the scales the popularity they had earned in the War of Independence and the Italian war of liberation. It was in vain that Mór Perczel, who had joined the Left-Centre, headed the organization. The associations, under the influence of Kossuth's letters and the Extreme-Left's agitation, became more and more radical. It was then, in agreement with the government, that the gentry leaders themselves hastened to disband the veterans' associations which had broken loose from their influence.

From the autumn of 1867, then, the Extreme-Left began to organize the democratic circles, which desired the restoration of the constitution of 1848 in full and the institution of real democracy. The circles multiplied like mushrooms, especially in the Great Plain, among the poor peasantry and plebeian intelligentsia of the market towns in the region between the Danube and the Tisza. The peasantry in many places hoped the restoration of constitutionalism would lead to redress of their grievances arising from the urban settlement. The poor population of the market towns in the Great Plain demanded the just distribution of the extensive town common lands and the unequally allotted pasturage. Their movement soon found a leader in János Asztalos, a lawyer from Kecskemét. The circles and mass meetings organized by Asztalos stirred the masses prepared to fight for land, independence and democracy.

The government had no scruples about imprisoning Böszörményi on the pretext of having violated the press laws—but actually for fighting courageously against the Compromise. He died soon afterwards in prison. The government did not hesitate either to suppress the rising popular-national movement. In March 1868 the democratic circles

were dissolved and János Asztalos arrested. The people hurrying to his rescue were dispersed by police and artillery fire. The democratic circles in the Great Plain were also forcibly broken up, and several dozens of their leaders imprisoned.

### The Beginnings of the Socialist Workers' Movement in Hungary

Working-class organizations already existed, in the form of self-teaching and assistance associations, in the period of absolutism. There had been local demonstrations and strikes at Selmecbánya and Pest, especially among the printers. The first independent, political organization, the General Workers' Association, was formed only after the Compromise, on 9 February 1868, in a suburban joiners' shop. The first organizers, such as János Hrabje, a member of the General Council of the First International, were workers who became socialists during their stays abroad. 'Workers!'—proclaimed the first manifesto of the General Workers' Association—'we must leave slavery, the Egypt of wages, and march into the promised land of independence.' Their programme included demands for political rights and the suffrage, the establishment of workers' productive associations to overcome capitalism, education and help for the workers. The Hungarian workers' movement, closely allied to that of Austria and Germany, was in its early stages under the influence of Lassalle's teachings.

The rapid spread and the popularity of the General Workers' Association's branches demonstrate how much the demand for organization was already alive among the oppressed working masses. A whole series of branches was started in the factories of the capital and in provincial industrial centres. In 1869, Mihály Táncsics became chairman of the Association, and his paper, *Arany Trombita* (The Golden Trumpet), became their organ. Táncsics, the old plebeian revolutionary, deeply sympathized with the working people's struggle for their rights, but he did not completely understand the aspirations of the modern workers' movement. Thus, when he naively applied to the government for financial support, the leaders of the General Workers' Association broke with him.

In the late 1860s the Marxist conceptions of the First International became known in Hungary, too, through leaflets, letters and personal contacts. The Hungarian representative of the General Council of the International, the iron worker Károly Farkas, did his utmost for their propagation. In 1870, he established the General Workers' Sickness and Disablement Fund. In the political and organizational develop-

ment of the General Workers' Association Farkas had the praiseworthy collaboration of the two printers, Károly Ihrlinger and József Kretoivics, and the socialist journalist Zsigmond Politzer.

At the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in the summer of 1870 the Workers' Association, in accordance with the principles of the International, called for the neutrality of the Monarchy and took its stand against the war of conquest. The Paris Commune exercised wide and stimulating influence on the Hungarian workers' movement; a wave of strikes began in the spring of 1871. The workers demanded the reduction of their working hours from 12–14 hours to 10, better working conditions, better housing, better treatment and political rights. They demonstrated on several occasions in favour of the Paris Commune, and when it fell they went on 11 June to a meeting of protest in closed formation, wearing crape.

The government would not tolerate the growth of the workers' movement. It joined forces with the international campaign of reaction following the suppression of the Commune. It banned the General Workers' Association, and its leaders were charged with treason. The trial took a whole year, and though the leaders were eventually acquitted because of the lack of evidence, constant persecution ruined the General Workers' Association. The first political organization was disbanded. The workers' movement in Hungary came to a standstill for a few years, as it had in other European countries at that time.

The popular movements which emerged under legal conditions and the nationalist opposition to the Compromise—both Hungarian and non-Hungarian—greatly influenced further political developments. The popular movements with a revolutionary potential had a dampening effect on the activities of the opposition parties under the leadership of the gentry. It was in the spring of 1868 that the Left-Centre considered the time ripe to issue a new programme. The 'Bihar Points' \* on the one hand opposed the delegations and the joint ministries, demanding constitutional independence, but on the other hand denounced the popular movements as dangerous to the security of society. Such a programme, shot through with patriotic slogans, was highly apt to win over the oppositional landed gentry and the middle classes because it combined the prospect of constitutional alterations of the Compromise with the demand that the social order remain unchanged.

At the same time the Extreme-Left was organized, calling itself the 'Party of 1848'. It called for full independence, but tacitly recognized the common ruler, the 'personal union'. The party also insisted on the

\* Bihar County was the family residence of the party leader, Kálmán Tisza.

further development of democratic principles, but restricted them to universal suffrage and other civil rights. The party kept aloof from the peasantry's demand for land, their movements and 'excesses'. The programme and tactics of the party adhered in their main features to Kossuth's principles and advice. Though Kossuth had assumed more uncompromising ideas about independence and was more foresighted than the politicians at home on the nationality question, he always interpreted democracy in the liberal fashion and was never able to connect the programme of uncompromising independence with a democratic agrarian programme going beyond the principles of 1848. In political life after the Compromise, national and social radicalism followed separate courses, even in the opposition parties; they remained connected for a long time only in the consciousness of the poor peasantry.

### Building of a State Apparatus

One of the results of the wave of opposition to the Compromise was the more energetic development of the dualist apparatus by the ruling circles. Although the government had at its disposal the forces of the so-called common army (which was literally an imperial and royal army—German abbr. *k.u.k.*), it also could not do without permanent, more mobile Hungarian security forces, which would be under its immediate command. By 1868, after prolonged debates, the government succeeded in overcoming the objections of Francis Joseph and Viennese military circles to the establishment of a separate Hungarian armed force. Thus a Hungarian defence force came into existence which was national in name (*Honvéd*) but imperial and royal in leadership: a tame Hungarian army in Austrian uniform. The small defence force was a kind of appendage to the common army, without artillery or technical units. Yet it was viewed as a national achievement by a leading stratum content with the appearance of independence, a useful means to hold in check the unruly minorities and peasant masses. In addition, the gendarmerie was retained in Transylvania and Croatia-Slavonia.

The introduction of a centralized administration caused serious concern to the new system. The contradiction between the bourgeois system of ministerial government based on the principles of 1867 and the mainly oppositional and feudal-minded county system was removed by a compromise between state and county in 1870. The county remained as a unit of government, with elected officials and very re-

stricted autonomy, but with ever broader power given to a lord lieutenant at the head, appointed by the king on the nomination of the government. The offices filled by experts were one after the other brought under state control. At the same time, the administration of justice was separated from public administration, and a civil code of justice created with an independent body of justices and attorneys, and a modernized Corpus Juris. The government tried to apply liberal principles in its policy concerning the Churches, too. The Concordat of 1855 was not recognized in Hungary, and the king's right to approve the publication of papal bulls (*ius placetum regis*) was restored. Matters concerning the Church and religion were brought under the control of the minister of religion and education, and the emancipation of the Jews was enacted. An act of 1868 provided for compulsory elementary schooling from the age of 6 to 12, and for instruction in the language of the local population. This was a significant measure of cultural policy in a multinational country. The act also authorized the government to establish state elementary schools where none had existed, or where the denominational school was not adequate; it also provided for the establishment of teachers' training colleges and increased state supervision of denominational schools, prescribing the subjects to be taught.

The first laws enacted after the Compromise reflected the spirit of liberal reform and had a civilizing influence on the country. The new state apparatus, on the other hand, also inherited much of the old system. In the system of law and administration feudal remnants were preserved: at the lower level, primarily the villages, administration and justice were in the same hands—in those of the all-powerful district administrator (*szolgabíró*). The registration of births, marriages and deaths, and adjudication in marriage affairs, remained church privileges. The Catholic Church was not entirely separated from the state, and it retained numerous privileges as well as its enormous fortune originating from medieval times. Thus, the Hungarian state in the period of the Dual Monarchy was a national state erected over a multinational country, a bourgeois state shot through with feudal remnants.

### The Fusion of Parties of 1875

The construction of a state apparatus was hampered by an internal political crisis lasting several years in the early 1870s. The government party, owing to intense rivalries in the background of an economic and



political boom, began to break up into factions. It also suffered the departure from the scene of great political figures. The liberal-minded minister of education József Eötvös died in 1871, and Gyula Andrassy was appointed in the autumn of the same year as the common minister of foreign affairs. Ferenc Deák, disillusioned, seeing profiteering and conservatism, which were alien to his nature spreading, retired from the public scene even before his death in 1876. The government party was also weakened from having been obliged to assume the unpopular task of defending the Compromise. Its unpopularity became obvious at the general election of 1869 when it lost 60 seats, while the opposition gained ground.

Andrassy was followed in the premiership by the ex-minister of joint finances, Menyhért Lónyay, who was raised to the rank of count in reward for his services. Lónyay was not popular with a Hungarian public opinion dominated by the gentry. His political standing suffered greatly from his associations with the aristocracy, his snobbery and the suspicion that he was involved in shady business deals. As prime minister he followed a rigid policy, which did not shrink from force. His negotiations with conservative politicians of the nationalities added little to his popularity, either with the Hungarian nationalists or with the nationalities themselves. The latter greatly resented his autocratic and repressive measures, such as the dissolution of the Croatian parliament, the banning of a Serbian Orthodox Church congress and of the Serbian youth organization (the *Omladina*).

At the end of 1871, the government, with an eye on the approaching elections, proposed measures further restricting the narrow suffrage and increasing the duration of parliament from 3 to 5 years. The opposition, however, succeeded in defeating the motion by obstruction. Lónyay dared not contravene the standing orders of the House and left his motion in abeyance, but the elections were prepared with tremendous official bias and took place to the accompaniment of flagrant abuses. The enraged opposition fought back with similar weapons: the shady ventures of Lónyay were openly cast in his teeth in parliament, and the consequent universal repugnance forced him to resign.

The economic crisis of 1873 also added to the disintegration of the government party. For the first time the economic life of the country, now well on the road of capitalist development, suffered a serious setback: several dozen small and a number of big firms went bankrupt, and the state finances became unbalanced. The deficit which had been accumulating for some years very nearly caused the bankruptcy of the state in 1873. The insignificant short-lived governments

succeeding Lónyay's obtained a loan of 150 million gulden, at very heavy terms, from the House of Rothschild and other foreign creditors. Bankruptcy was averted, but the political credit of the government party was very nearly exhausted. To avoid total collapse the government party finally saw no other way out than in a merger with the Left-Centre; and they began to pave the way for this.

With the passage of time, intransigent oppositional sentiments had declined in both Kálmán Tisza and in his party, and they became more willing to strike a bargain. After the elections of 1872, it became obvious that they had little chance indeed of coming to power in a constitutional manner, yet they considered a large-scale opposition movement under their leadership somewhat risky, and the toppling of the existing system dangerous. Therefore they, too, were now inclined to gain the bastions of power by agreement rather than siege. The transitional governments successfully paved the way, and from 1874 Tisza himself supported the merger. As a clever tactician he bided his time and let others do the dirty work, such as threshing out an anti-democratic suffrage act and negotiating a usurious loan. It was early in 1875 that he saw that the time was ripe for the fusion of the majority of his party with the exhausted government party. The new government party formed on 1 March 1875 assumed the name Liberal Party. A few months later Tisza, who had laid aside the 'Bihar Points', became prime minister.

Despite the fact that the conservative, aristocratic faction of the Deák party and some staunch members of the Left-Centre did not adhere to the merger, the mass basis of the new government party had considerably widened. The merger also strengthened internally the hitherto still quite unstable system of dualism.

The merger also demonstrated, however, that the system of dualism did not offer openings for the rotation of rival political parties in power. Neither the landed nobility nor the 'middle class' modelling itself upon them desired any genuine social reform. The system of the Dual Monarchy, on the other hand, did not permit any constitutional changes or significant national achievements either. The dominance of a single government party—and within its framework minor changes, at most in programme, betrayals of principle, mergers and compacts—was to hamper the constitutional political development of Hungary after 1867.

### Expansion in the Balkans. The Foreign Policy of the Monarchy

Foreign affairs undoubtedly contributed to the consolidation of the internal situation, particularly the Eastern Question, which was at the forefront of the foreign policy of the Monarchy in the 1870s.

With the Franco-Prussian War a period of misfortune in the foreign affairs of the Habsburg Monarchy came to an end. The German empire, unified under Prussian leadership, had once for all brought to an end the *grossdeutsche* policy of the Monarchy. The foreign policy planners, if they did not wish to hazard unrealistic ventures, had to look in other directions. This change was brought about by Beust himself, who had formerly directed the anti-Prussian policy. In a lengthy memorandum of May 1871, Beust laid down the basic principles of a new policy: good relations with Germany, co-operation with Russia and expansion in the Balkans. The programme cunningly combined the foreign policy conceptions of the Austro-German liberals with those of court circles. As a sign of Austro-Hungarian and German *rapprochement*, a meeting was held between Francis Joseph, the Emperor William, Beust and Bismarck in August 1871. Was it not a freak of fortune—or perhaps only of Habsburg policy—that after so many frustrations Beust had to resign his post as minister of foreign affairs just when he had succeeded in shaping a realistic foreign policy? Two weeks after the fall of Hohenwart, and as a result of this, Beust himself had to go in mid-November.

Gyula Andrassy, who succeeded him, did not immediately follow the policy of his unlucky predecessor. Andrassy was a representative of the Hungarian ruling clique that aimed at strengthening the Dual Monarchy, but his policy differed from that of Beust in that he regarded the containment of Czarist Russia and the averting of the Pan-Slav 'menace' as the primary task of foreign policy. Immediately after taking office he turned to the government of Britain and offered to strengthen friendly relations and establish closer co-operation, a move aimed at Russia and primarily against a possible Russian-German alliance. However, the Gladstone government, although it emphasized the friendly relations and appreciated Andrassy's intentions, was not prepared to enter into any formal alliance.

Andrassy's anti-Russian programme found no support from Germany either. As early as 1871 Bismarck made clear to Andrassy, then prime minister of Hungary (shortly thereupon he became minister of foreign affairs), that he would not sacrifice good relations with Russia for the sake of the Monarchy, and especially not in order to

support the foreign interests of the Hungarian ruling class's oppressive nationality policy. He also indicated that he preferred to work for agreement among the three emperors. Andrassy was obliged to bow to the objective balance of forces, the more so as Bismarck's suggestion met with the approval of Vienna court circles. Thus, while the main spokesman for an active anti-Russian policy was in charge of the foreign office, the Monarchy joined the League of the Three Emperors.

The three emperors, William I, Alexander II and Francis Joseph, met for the first time in Berlin in September 1872. The results of the foreign ministers' conferences were put in writing during William's visit to St. Petersburg in May 1873 and during the visit of Alexander II to Vienna in June. The agreement, as applied to Austria-Hungary and Russia, guaranteed the *status quo* in the Balkans. The two parties concerned agreed not to intervene in Balkan conflicts and, if unusual developments should occur, to hold discussions before taking any action. The agreement was a consultative pact, aiming at maintaining the *status quo* and preventing open clashes. Thus, Andrassy, even within the framework of reluctant co-operation, stuck to the basic elements of his conception: traditional friendship with Britain, which enabled him to avoid military alliance with Russia and obtain the recognition of the principle of a Balkan *status quo*. This latter signified an anti-Slav friendship with Turkey and the defence of her integrity. In the first half of the seventies the foreign policy interests and desires of the most influential circles of the Monarchy, that is to say, of the court and the Austrian and Hungarian ruling circles, coincided.

### Occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Balkan events of the latter half of the decade, however, led to a change in foreign policy. In the summer of 1875, Bosnia and Herzegovina rose against the autocratic Turkish rule. In the spring of 1876, there followed an uprising in Bulgaria, and subsequently Serbia and Montenegro declared war on Turkey. In the beginning Andrassy tried to maintain a pro-Turkish neutrality, fearing the success of the uprising and the emergence of a large Slav state. He tried to pacify his partners and persuade them to maintain a united front while also trying to persuade Turkey to introduce reforms. He succeeded in enforcing his ideas at various negotiations, and especially at the meeting of Francis Joseph and Alexander II at Reichstadt in June 1876, where the principles of non-intervention and the *status quo* were once more agreed to. But an armed conflict was already looming on the horizon.

The court circles and Francis Joseph intended to turn the Balkan conflict to their advantage; they hoped to make up for the losses inflicted on them in the West and to gain new territories. They were willing to co-operate with Czarist Russia in the partition of the Balkans, and they did not share the concern shown by the Hungarian ruling circles, afraid of Slavic preponderance, about the annexation of new territories in that area. The emperor did not shut his ears to suggestions from Russia, which was busily preparing for war.

In the autumn of 1876, Russia decided, on the pretext of liberating the Slavic peoples, but really to satisfy her old desire for the Dardanelles, to intervene in the Balkan conflict. As it became obvious that the *status quo* could not be maintained, Andrassy again had to compromise. He accepted the compensation offered for the neutrality of the Monarchy in the Russo-Turkish war, which was the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He agreed that Bessarabia and certain Armenian territories should be annexed by Russia, and he confirmed earlier agreements for the independence of Rumania, Serbia, Bulgaria and Albania, stipulating that neither party should permit the formation of a great Slav state in the Balkans. The agreements were ratified in Budapest on 15 January 1877. The Russo-Turkish war broke out three months later and ended with the resounding defeat of Turkey.

The treaty signed in March 1878 at San Stefano conceded great territorial gains to Russia. Bulgaria not only gained her independence but was also given far more territory, including the Aegean coastal region, that had been decided upon in the Budapest agreement. An increase of this dimension in Russia's size and the establishment of a great Bulgarian state were definitely contrary to the interests of the Monarchy and also alarmed the other great powers. In these circumstances it was not especially difficult for Andrassy to persuade both Disraeli and Bismarck of the need for an international revision of the Treaty of San Stefano. The Congress of Berlin convened in June 1878 for this purpose. Even before the Congress, the Disraeli government made an agreement with Russia and Turkey over the disputed territorial questions, and on 6 June it agreed with Andrassy as well that they would take a common standpoint. At the Congress, the great powers forced Russia to return some of the territories she had occupied, reduced the length of time the Russian garrison was to remain in Bulgaria and took away Eastern Rumania from Bulgaria to return it to Turkey. At the same time the Monarchy obtained the assent of the Congress to the occupation, for an unlimited period, of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and to the keeping of a garrison in the *sanjak* of Novi Bazar, which separated Serbia from Montenegro.

The Congress of Berlin strengthened the great-power status of Austria-Hungary. The occupation of the two South Slav provinces nevertheless met with widespread protest in Hungary. Public opinion in Hungary had for some time been suspicious of Andrassy's seemingly 'pro-Russian' foreign policy, only made acceptable by the maintenance of the anti-Slav Balkan *status quo*. The strengthening of the small Balkan states and the occupation, however, clearly violated this principle. There were nation-wide demonstrations against the occupation. But while the opposition and the Turcophilism of the ruling stratum were directed against the annexation of new Slavic territories, that is, against any increase of the Slavs within the Monarchy or any strengthening of the mother countries beyond the frontiers, the working class and democratic intelligentsia condemned the anti-democratic war of conquest. The discontent undermined the situation of Tisza's government, and Tisza was able only with great difficulty to scrape through the rocky passages of the unpopular and, in terms of human lives, very costly occupations.

#### Alliance with Germany

The Balkan crisis and the Congress of Berlin had substantially contributed to the co-operation between the Monarchy and Germany, and Andrassy did his best to exploit it without delay. In October 1879, with the good offices of Chancellor Bismarck, the Monarchy entered into close alliance with Germany. According to the treaty, should Russia attack either party, the other would offer full support. In the event of an attack by another power, the allies agreed only to maintain benevolent neutrality. Even if Andrassy did not succeed in attaining his original aim—active co-operation against Russia—the Dual Alliance significantly strengthened the external basis for the Monarchy's new foreign policy. Relying on the German alliance, the three emperors renewed their agreement in June 1881; in it Russia recognized the Monarchy's new position in the Balkans and agreed in principle to the idea of Bosnia and Herzegovina later being annexed.

In 1882, Italy joined the Dual Alliance. The charter of the Triple Alliance thus established committed the contracting parties to furnishing each other armed support only in the case of an attack by France or by two or more powers; in the case of a Russian attack it secured only Italy's benevolent neutrality for the Monarchy. In a treaty signed in 1881, Serbia accepted the Monarchy's tutelage and support in foreign policy, and at the same time undertook not to toler-

ate any agitation in her territory against the Monarchy. In October 1883 the Monarchy concluded a secret military and friendship treaty with Rumania, which was aimed against Russia. In the second half of the 1880s, after the successful easing of the tension in the Balkans, relations with Bulgaria also improved. Consequently, in the last twenty years of the century the international prestige of the Monarchy was firmly established and its influence in the Balkans preponderant.

It was Andrassy who laid down the foundations of this foreign policy. He represented, and carried out in practice, those principles which were to be applied consistently in the foreign policy of the Monarchy in the coming three decades. Even he, however, could not avoid the fate of his predecessor. Just as Beust, after initiating the new trend in Austro-Hungarian policy, was forced to resign, so Andrassy too, after bringing it to completion, after the successful Congress of Berlin and the signing of the Dual Alliance, had to leave the Ballhausplatz. Nevertheless he handed over to his successors a firm great-power position that was to last for a generation.

In the mid-1870s, the dualist system, slowly establishing itself at home and abroad, had to overcome one other obstacle: troubles arose at the first expiration of the Austro-Hungarian economic compromise, which had to be renewed every ten years. Kálmán Tisza had pledged even before the merger, and again during the 1875 elections, that he would alter the customs and trade agreement in Hungary's favour and, especially, that he would obtain for Hungary an independent bank of issue. During the negotiations, nevertheless, which lasted for nearly three years, the Austrian partner, in a more favourable economic position, won out on every point. Tisza was compelled to beat a steady retreat. In the end he was unable to attain any economic results at all, other than the mere constitutional formality that the Austrian National Bank was re-named Austro-Hungarian; and, in fact, the central issue of the negotiations, the customs policy of the Monarchy, was modified to suit the interests of Austrian capital.

This compromise, tantamount to defeat, and the unpopular occupation severely tested the political endurance of the Liberal Party. Party unity was loosened, and some factions left the party. There were demonstrations throughout the country, and in parliament the government could maintain a majority of only a few votes; this was the internal situation in 1877-8. The situation did not become more stable until the end of the decade. It was not until then that the ruling classes responsible for the Compromise did at last firmly establish themselves in the edifice, the foundation of which had been laid by Ferenc Deák and the interior furnished by Kálmán Tisza.

### A Period of Lull in the 1880s. The Government of Kálmán Tisza

Both the personality and position of Tisza rendered him more suitable than any of his predecessors for the task of consolidating the system. He came from a Protestant gentry family of the region beyond the Tisza, and his participation in the 1848 resistance movement, plus the social milieu out of which he grew, placed him among the historical ruling élite. But as a big landowner in Bihar County, his interests and newer family connections also tied him to the aristocracy; his loyal and flexible opposition made him acceptable to the supporters of the Compromise and also to Vienna. The mediocre tactical skill that was inadequate in revolutionary situations or for great creations was eminently suitable to an age of calm and consolidation, to the genial taroc parties of a disillusioned parliamentary ruling circle. He had keen political acumen and deep knowledge of human nature, he was flexible, more practical than conscientious, not keen on making decisions, preferring to let sleeping dogs lie, yet eager to keep up the appearance of governing a state under law (*Rechtstaat*). His fragile liberalism went side by side with indifference to those who were excluded from the ruling order, ruthlessness and readiness to use force against them if necessary. All of these were useful qualities indeed, as long as there was little trouble in the state, and conflicts were still dormant.

Tisza solved the political troubles of the Dual Monarchy with temporary success: he consolidated, in a constitutional manner, the 1867 system of the big landowners, in a multinational country, in the face of an oppositional and peasant majority. According to his belief the free play of economic forces should not be restricted, and political forces and struggles should be conducted and concentrated in parliament, within the narrow confines of constitutionalism. He needed three things to accomplish this: an adaptable parliamentary system, a manageable and obedient bureaucracy, and security forces ready to suppress any 'non-parliamentary' movement.

The franchise had already moulded Hungarian parliamentary life to the interests of the ruling classes. A high property qualification and other restrictions automatically excluded from the franchise the landless peasantry, those workers employed by others, servants, employees and the larger part of the petty bourgeoisie, thus limiting the franchise to about 6 per cent of the country's population. This screening of the voters, however, was still not a sufficient guarantee against the landed peasantry, the middle classes and the bourgeoisie of the nationalities.

The property qualification was supplemented by an electoral geometry used for the benefit of the government party; for instance, because of arbitrary fixing of constituencies, districts with non-Hungarian or opposition majorities could elect only a disproportionately small number of members to parliament. Other ways and means of assuring a government-party majority lay in the state apparatus and public administration, the registrars of voters, the system of open balloting, the canvassers with great funds at their disposal, the winning and dining of voters, bribery—or intimidation, fraud and force. Lawlessness became the unwritten law of electioneering, abuses became the usual practice, and corruption was elevated to a political principle.

Nevertheless, an artificial government majority was not sufficient in itself: the government party had to be kept in line. And Kálmán Tisza was an expert trainer. He knew how to secure followers through the irresistible attraction of power; he placed his men in good sinecures and thus recruited a disciplined party of yesmen—the so-called 'Mamelukes'.

In the Liberal Party, as well as in state administration, the leadership was in the hands of the big landowners, but many important positions were filled by the middle nobility, the declining, impoverished segment of the nobility who in this period began to call themselves 'the gentry'; it was with these elements that Tisza inflated the ranks of the bureaucracy. The growing Hungarian bourgeoisie hardly took a direct part in government. Their interests were represented, within the framework of the dualist system and of the agrarian interests, by the landowning ruling élite. The party, with increasingly flabby conviction, professed liberal views. Liberal principles did indeed prevail in economic policy and in matters of religion, but in politics they were considerably curtailed, often denied altogether. Kálmán Mikszáth, the famous writer, who himself belonged to the high command of the self-advertised Liberal Party, delighted in mocking its pretensions: 'The new clothes were not genuine leather but only an imitation.' As far as principles and methods were concerned, the party and its leader were an excellent match. Tisza succeeded in building up a tractable party of 'Mamelukes', and, within parliamentary limits, a one-party system. The centralization of administration without revolutionary reform advanced almost unobserved. The jurisdiction of the lord lieutenant, and that of the administrative committee under his control (half of its members appointed by the government), became increasingly powerful at the expense of the autonomy of the counties.

Tisza also brought to perfection the third prerequisite of his system—the special police. Instead of the outmoded system of country

constables, he set up in 1881 a gendarmerie patterned after that of the period of absolutism. This gendarmerie, which was under the ministries of defence and of interior, enjoyed far-reaching, even arbitrary power, not only in the pursuit of ordinary crime, but especially in political matters and in the oppression of the landless peasants. The new gendarmerie had no control over major country towns but their services could be contracted by these. At the same time, in 1882, the police force of the capital was also reorganized.

The *Rechtsstaat* thus shunted into the narrow channel of constitutionalism was bulwarked by its liberal government with a number of anti-democratic laws and measures. The new penal code of 1878 laid down liberal legal guarantees, but declared any 'agitation' against property, class and nationality a criminal action. This included socialist and nationalist propaganda, any organization for that purpose, and any strike movement. The Agricultural Labour Act of 1876 curtailed in essential matters the legal equality and personal freedom of agricultural labourers and day-labourers. It declared that the hired labourer or servant was 'under the authority of his master' and could be subjected to light physical punishment; the labourer abandoning employment could be forcibly returned by the gendarmerie.

The nationalities also suffered harsh treatment. In 1875–6 several Slovak secondary schools were closed; the Matica Slovenská, the Slovak cultural society, was banned; and Svetozar Miletić, a progressive Serbian member of parliament, was illegally arrested. The Public Education Act of 1868 was modified in 1879; in all non-Hungarian schools and teachers' training colleges the teaching of Hungarian was made compulsory. The teachers of the nationalities had to acquire sufficient mastery of Hungarian for the teaching of that language. The same line was pursued with respect to the secondary schools, and in 1891 the teaching of Hungarian was also made compulsory in nursery schools.

The tendencies manifesting themselves in anti-liberal legislation were carried into effect by their administrators with crude, primitive methods. The gentry who filled the ranks of the state apparatus treated the people as the bailiffs had formerly treated the serfs and, unrestrained by law, committed injustices one after the other, especially against the agrarian proletariat, socialists, and the nationalities.

Petty, ruthless measures hampered the workers' movement, too. After a decline following the defeat of the Paris Commune, the Hungarian movement recovered in the second half of the seventies. The support of the Austrian labour movement played a great role in this. Centres of organization developed around the sick-fund and the



workers' press. Leó Frankel, former minister of the Paris Commune and a leading member of the international workers' movement, returned home in 1876 and based the organization on them. Frankel was a perspicacious, trained revolutionary, who had worked for a time with Marx on the General Council of the International. Returned home, he saw his first tasks as the wide, high-level propagation of Marx's teachings and the foundation of a new workers' party. It was under him that a provisional organization, the 'Non-Voters Party', was established in 1878, so named because the police would not permit any other name or programme; and in 1880, after the fusion of the two workers' organizations which had opposed each other up to that time, the General Workers' Party of Hungary came into being. The fundamentally Marxist party programme aimed ultimately at bringing the means of production into public ownership and ending all forms of exploitation. As an immediate objective it postulated the achievement of bourgeois-democratic rights and the improvement of the workers' social situation. The party did not entirely eliminate the influence of Lassalle, nor was it aware of the specific tasks of the Hungarian movement, but it succeeded in disseminating Marxist views, gathering together the class-conscious workers, and in launching the movement itself.

Frankel's activities and the thriving of the workers' movement were regarded with suspicion by the government, and after the successful organization of the party, counter-measures were taken. Frankel was arrested, and on the pretext of libellous articles in the press, sentenced to a year and a half in prison. Since police control was becoming tighter, Frankel thought it wiser, after his release, to leave the country. The leadership in the party shifted into the hands of the officials of the sick-fund, who were more ready to compromise. Socialist propaganda and the movement itself again slackened considerably in the 1880s.

The consolidation of the state and perfection of the apparatus of power was partly the result, partly a causal factor and a pillar of the period of peace throughout the whole of Europe. Tisza, along with his monarch and his Austrian counterparts, kept to the golden rule of the 'period of peace': *quieta non movere*. He ventured no greater changes than the reform of the Upper House, tying membership partly to a high property qualification, partly to royal appointment.

In the 1880s, the Liberal Party machinery worked smoothly. Its absolute majority in parliament was no longer threatened by the feeble opposition. The conservative opposition on the right of the House had already formed an independent party at the time of the merger.

This party, together with the high aristocracy who dominated the Magnates' Casino and hovered around the court, believed themselves the guardians and protectors of feudal traditions. When the discontented members left the government party in 1878, they assumed the name of the United Opposition, but changed it in 1881 to the Moderate Opposition. This party, based on the principles of 1867, had no definite programme. Its spokesmen, particularly its emerging leader Count Albert Apponyi, were receptive to the anti-liberal views streaming into the country from the West, especially from Germany and Austria, but the idea of 'conservative reform' had not yet, in the eighties, found any wide response among the Hungarian landowners.

The nationalist opposition occupied the left of the House. During the seventies they were divided into factions and were reunited only formally under the name of 'Independence and '48 Party' in 1884. The party included oppositional nationalist landowners, intellectuals, part of the middle bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and the great mass of the landed peasantry. The pivot of the party, along with certain bourgeois liberal demands professed in principle and occasionally even actually fought for, was the programme of 1848, the constitutional struggle for the personal union, which had no real connection, however, with the programme of democratic transformation, and in fact increasingly deviated from it.

Dissension between the factions did not cease after the union of 1884. Personal conflicts and differences of principle separated such men as Gábor Ugron and Miklós Bartha, who favoured the conservative interests of the landowners and were not so keen on independence, from the intransigently independent and liberal-minded Dániel Irányi, Gyula Justh, Ignác Helfy, József Madarász and Károly Eötvös. And all of them differed greatly from the 'white crow' of the movement, Lajos Mocsáry, who preached the fair treatment and conciliation of the nationalities. Mocsáry was rejected and finally excluded from the party. The Independence Party enjoyed great popularity among the middle and lower classes, but had no desire to mobilize their forces for radical change, because the party gradually accommodated itself to the system of dualism.

#### Emerging Social and Political Conflicts in the 1880s

Under a seemingly calm surface, in the course of the incessant micro-sociological changes produced by capitalist development, new tensions piled up. With the landowners lagging behind or crushed in free com-



petition, the impecunious gentry and dwindling petty-bourgeois elements became anti-capitalist and increasingly nationalist. As an offshoot of this, anti-semitism raised its ugly head. In the early 1880s, a chaotic wave of anti-semitism swept over the country, culminating in the Tiszaeszlár affair of 1883; following the disappearance of a little girl, the medieval blood-accusation was revived against the Jews of the village. After an acquittal in the unfounded suit, anti-semitic disturbances broke out in a number of counties. In the elections of 1884, a newly-founded anti-semitic party scored considerable successes. In the second half of the 1880s, political anti-semitism stopped, and the party founded for exploiting it was dissolved. But anti-semitism survived and remained a latent infection in public life, cropping up from time to time, then taking complete possession of Hungarian society after the First World War.

The main trend in the Hungarian opposition movement continued to be a nationalism which was intolerant towards the national minorities and saturated with the idea of independence. The common platform of all opposition groups was the establishment of Hungarian rule in the face of Austria and the nationalities, and this was even the meeting-point between the opposition and the government party. The focal point of nationalist outbursts, and a constant irritant in public life, was the imperial and royal army. It was alien to the nation, under German command, with officers who were anti-Hungarian in spirit and who despised Hungarian traditions. The Tisza government was in a precarious position when, at the end of the decade, at the urgent insistence of the military circles, the reform of the army had to be discussed in parliament. The Defence Bill of 1889, by trying to modernize the system of recruitment and the training of officers, proposed changes unfavourable to the Hungarians.

The government, knowing that it was putting its hands into a hornets' nest, tried in vain to dampen emotions. Public opinion was averse to the bill, especially the stipulation that reserve officers were to pass a compulsory examination in German. All factions of the opposition, in a united patriotic outburst, attacked the government. When the proposal was discussed, in the winter of 1889, there were violent demonstrations in the capital and serious unrest throughout the country. The government was forced by the mass movement to modify the bill, especially in connection with the compulsory examination in German. Hungarian and Croatian were introduced as alternatives.

The Defence Act finally became law, but this success exhausted whatever was left of the government's authority. Tisza made every

effort to re-establish his power. He reshuffled his cabinet, bringing in outstanding men, such as Dezső Szilágyi as minister of justice, Gábor Baross as minister of commerce and Sándor Wekerle as minister of finance; he planned financial measures to restore a state budget that had been struggling for decades with deficits; and he prepared for liberal reforms. But his efforts at this juncture were of no avail. There were also differences within the government party; and tactical skill helped little here. There came a moving final scene: a showy defence of Kossuth's Hungarian citizenship—although it was known that the king would reject it—then an honourable retreat; Tisza resigned in March 1890.

Under the surface of parliamentary differences, grave social and political problems emerged. In the debate on the Defence Bill it became obvious that during the decades of capitalist development new social conflicts were developing. Between the landowning and capitalist classes and among the middle classes there were serious differences of interest. This growing dissatisfaction looked for new outlets in political life.

#### **Economic Progress. Achievements and Contradictions of Capitalism**

The Compromise of 1867 had not materially altered the conditions of economic development, but political consolidation had had a favourable effect in the exploitation of the general European prosperity. In the last third of the century, Hungary's grave problems of the Eastern European type of capitalist development were solved to some extent; financial resources were multiplied and domestic accumulation considerably quickened. Capitalism gained ground, establishing a credit system and heavy industry. It also transformed agriculture. The table below should serve as an illustration of the rate of economic development.

A more concise and comprehensive estimate may be made concerning economic development and its domestic proportions by the indices of national income.

Taking into account changes in the relative value of money, during these six decades the aggregate national income rose four to fivefold. Although the industrial sector doubled its output, agriculture as late as 1913 still supplied two-thirds of the national income. Progress is reflected also in comparison with Austria: while the average annual rate of economic growth in Hungary was about 2.8–2.9 per cent, in Austria it was only 2.6–2.8 per cent.

*The Economic Development of Hungary: Main Indices  
1850-1913*

Year	Popula- tion (millions)	Railway lines (km)	Machinery (HP)	Number of industrial workers	Amount of capital stock in million crowns		
					Banking institutions	Mortgages	Industrial joint- stock companies
1850	13.2	178			50	19	1873 — 200
1867	15.4	2,200	1863 — 8,571		729	219	1880 — 271
1880	15.6	7,200	1884 — 63,869	1880 — 110,000	1,848	488	1890 — 374
1890	17.4	11,500		1890 — 165,000	3,282	940	1900 — 703
1900	19.3	17,000	1898 — 307,361	1900 — 320,000	6,248	1,920	1910 — 1,512
1910-13	20.9	22,000	886,125	1910 — 510,000 1913 — 620,000	13,197	3,138	

*National Income of Hungary\* 1850-1913  
(in million crowns)*

Year	Agriculture	%	Industry, mining	%	Trade	%	Gross domestic material product	1850 = 100
1850								
1870	670	80	95	12	55	8	820	100
1890	800	76	180	16.5	80	7.5	1,060	130
1900	2,209	63	860	25.3	409	11.7	3,478	424
1911-13	4,549	64	1,840	25.9	722	10.1	7,112	867

\* Owing to the fact that no estimate can be formed of the value of services before 1900, instead of the national income the net value of gross domestic material product (GDMP) is given.

*National Income of Austria-Hungary\*  
1850-1913  
(in million crowns)*

	In 1850			In 1911-13		
	Austria**	%	Hungary	%	A-H = =100	%
Agriculture	1,070	60	670	40	4,186	52.1
Industry, mining	520	84	95	16	5,809	75.9
Trade	285	83	55	17	2,446	77.2
Gross domestic material product (GDMP)	1,875	70	820	30	12,441	63.3
					7,111	36.4
					19,552	

\* Without the value of services.

\*\* Excluding Lombardy and Venetia.

During these six decades the ratio of relative economic development of Austria and Hungary changed from 70:30 to 63.6:36.4; the ratio of industrial production from 84:16 to 76:24. This was a reduction by 6.5 per cent of the difference in economic development between Austria and Hungary. It can be confirmed by other data, for instance a change in the ratio of the quota, the contribution to joint expenses. Hungary's contribution increased during this period by 6.4 per cent. Per capita national income was 107 crowns in Austria and 62 crowns in Hungary in 1850, 426 and 319 crowns respectively in 1913, the change in the ratio being again similar. Thus, it can be stated that in the period of capitalism Hungary gained 6-7 per cent on Austria, which was also developing at a fast rate.

As seen in the tables above, the period under discussion can be divided, from the point of view of economic history, into two phases. In the first phase, until 1890, foreign capital and internal resources were spent on banking institutions, the building of railways, on large estates and the extractive branches of industry. In the second phase, lasting until the First World War, accumulated capital was invested in agriculture and more and more in the growing industries. It was in this period that factory industry made great strides forward while monopoly capitalism began to develop more generally.

The greatest achievement of the first period was the establishment of the banking system along modern lines. It was by means of the banks, insurance companies and state loans that foreign capital entered the country. Not only Austrian but English, French, Belgian, and, increasingly from the end of the century, German capital was invested in Hungary.

In conjunction with the Creditanstalt of Vienna the Austrian House of Rothschild also took part in the establishment of the greatest Hungarian bank, the General Hungarian Credit Bank. The first Hungarian banking institution, the Hungarian Commercial Bank of Pest, founded in the Reform Era (1842), rose into prominence through Austrian capital, invested by the Wiener Bankverein. Banks sprang up like mushrooms. On the boards of directors could be found, beside the representatives of financial capital, the famous names of the old aristocratic families. These institutions thrived and accumulated tremendous fortunes from both foreign and domestic sources. The banks specialized at first in land mortgages, in loans for commerce and transport, and in speculative financial ventures. During the economic crisis of 1873 capital was withdrawn, and the financiers became more cautious. Capital entering the country in the 1880s became involved in more substantial banking, and took a growing interest in

industry as well as the above-mentioned fields. At the beginning of the twentieth century there emerged the great banking consortiums with their extensive industrial interests.

Among the productive investments the large-scale construction of railways was the most important from the point of view of the national economy. In 1867 there were about 2,000 km of railway lines; by 1913 they had increased to 22,000 km. In the same period the volume of goods traffic rose from 3 million tons to 72 million tons, the number of passengers increased from 3.5 million to 200 million. Railway building proved extremely profitable on several counts. It was profitable to the investor whose profit was guaranteed by the state in the form of interest, and to a host of politicians who, for their efforts in obtaining permits and political support, were given a share of the proceeds. The railways proved very useful to the farming landowners and to merchants as a cheap means of transport, and they also contributed to the development of the iron and machine industries in Hungary. Last but not least, the railway was one of the most important prerequisites for the development of a modern capitalist market.

The construction of railways naturally conformed to the economic and political conditions of the country. Budapest became the junction of all the main railway lines: from there and from Transdanubia the lines ran towards Vienna. The main and subsidiary lines first of all connected the wheat-growing territories, and primarily the large estates, with Budapest. Railway connections with important industrial regions were far from good and developed only at a later date. Water transport did not keep pace with the railways, and there were few roads in good repair. The significance of the former gradually declined, and the latter advanced rather sluggishly; compared with Western countries the road system was quite backward.

A modern transport system was indispensable for the development of trade. Many new trading, transport and export firms were established; warehouses and shops were built. Before the First World War, the turnover of foreign and domestic trade reached an annual 25,000 million crowns, six times the money in circulation.

### **Modern Transformation in Agriculture**

The quick circulation of goods and capital, the construction of credit facilities and adequate transport also transformed agricultural production. The agricultural boom of the 1860s developed further after

the Compromise and lasted for another decade. Hungarian wheat and flour consignments were well received in the industrial regions of the Monarchy and in Western Europe. Wheat prices were soaring, commodity production was profitable, and this led to an increase in land under cultivation. As a result, extensive stock-breeding in fertile regions was replaced by equally extensive corn production.

Lean years were soon to follow the boom. The crisis of 1873 had a depressing effect on the market, but real trouble did not come before the end of the decade, when enormous quantities of overseas wheat, mainly from America, flooded the European markets. The sudden fall in the price of grain inflicted a tremendous blow on Hungarian agriculture, where production costs were high on account of high land rents and outmoded methods of farming. To make matters worse, in order to defend their own agriculture, Western European countries imposed protective tariffs on foreign commodities. At the beginning of the eighties, grain prices dropped to half, later to one-third of what they had been before. For about two decades the whole of Europe suffered from an agrarian crisis. Repeated natural disasters added to the farmers' troubles; in the last two decades of the century phylloxera devastated the vineyards of Hungary, reducing them by nearly half, and wine production to one-fifth.

Afflicted by the disasters of nature and of capitalism, the majority of the gentry fell into debt and went bankrupt. Their estates were either sold by auction, given away or split up. The crisis caused still more damage to the small and dwarf peasantry. In the last decades of the century more than a hundred thousand independent farms changed hands. Some went to the big landowners, and others passed into the ownership of leaseholders who now formed a new stratum of owners. The phylloxera ruined the bourgeois of the cities of the Tokaj district and of Transdanubia, the lower gentry and the peasant owners of the vine-growing regions who were engaged in traditional viticulture. Even the big landowners suffered from the crisis; as their incomes declined, their debts accumulated.

The agrarian crisis, by upsetting the centuries-old balance in the division of labour between industrial Western Europe and agrarian Eastern Europe, forced Hungarian agriculture to make changes. The owners of the large estates looked for ways of solving the problem without interfering with the existing system, by obtaining state subsidies, creating a great number of entailed estates, by increasing the exploitation of the poor, and last but not least, by gradually introducing intensive methods of cultivation. The number of complaints soared, and various economic interests wrapped their struggles in

nationalist arguments, which finally produced more state subsidies, protective tariffs, and comparatively more intensive and modern methods of agriculture while leaving the basic structure unchanged. Yet agriculture survived the crisis.

Some results in agrarian development at the end of the century:

*Waste and Cultivated Land\**  
1871-1915

	1871-1875	1896-1900	1911-1915
	(in thousands of hectares)		
Total arable land	10,463	11,970	12,967
Waste land	2,290	1,458	1,149
Cultivated land	8,173	10,512	11,818

\* In Hungary, excluding Croatia-Slavonia.

*Percentage Distribution of Main Crops*

	1871-1885	1896-1900	1911-1915
Wheat	29.4	31.0	28.9
Rye	12.1	10.0	9.4
Barley	10.7	9.7	9.5
Oat	11.0	9.3	9.3
Maize	20.5	20.7	21.5
Potatoes	4.4	4.6	5.3
Sugar-beets	0.4	0.8	1.3
Cattle turnips	0.8	1.4	1.7
Others	10.7	12.5	13.1

As the above and the following tables show, production and productivity rose considerably. From the 1870s onward till the turn of the century 170 per cent more wheat was produced, rising to 216 per cent by the First World War. Maize rose by 167 and 266 per cent respectively, potatoes by 340 and 515 per cent, sugar-beets by 568 and 1,488 per cent. The increase was due partly to the cultivation of

waste lands and to drainage and flood control, resulting in a 24 per cent increase in arable land; it was also the result of a doubling of average yields. The rise in yields was itself due to improved soil cultivation and the use of machinery such as the iron plough and the threshing machine, introduced almost everywhere, and a more intensive rotation of crops.

Slight modifications occurred in the ratio among the sectors of agriculture. About the end of the century the enormous preponderance of corn production gave way somewhat to animal husbandry and to row crops and industrial crops. Around the cities, in the western counties and in the southern regions (Bánát), good milking cows were purchased, and the keeping of cattle in stables increased. Pig breeding increased throughout the country. Poultry farming developed, and egg and feather export became important. Potato crops increased, as did the production of sugar-beets, fodder and industrial plants in Western Hungary. Vegetable and fruit production developed in certain parts of the Great Plain. In the barren, sandy parts of the Great Plain new vineyards were started after the phylloxera epidemic.

Mention must be made of the social consequences of this economic development. Above all, the agrarian crisis quickened the break-up of small peasant farms and the trend (already strong on account of the rate of natural increase) towards depression and proletarianization. Certain agricultural inventions, especially the threshing machine, greatly reduced the period of work in the summer, and also the opportunities for employment. When the regulation of the waterways stopped at the end of the century, the number of the unemployed again increased considerably. Migration to the cities started in great numbers, and also emigration to the United States.

The splitting up of farms and the existence of open and hidden unemployment also increased the thirst for land, only partially satisfied by leasing plots or by the occasional new settlement or parcelling-out. The upswing of animal husbandry and fodder production, especially in Transdanubia, made less land available to the peasantry. Thus, at the turn of the century, opportunities for the peasants to lease land and the terms of hire of the agricultural labourers deteriorated. A lease exacting half of the produce, formerly common, was changed to the disadvantage of the tenant so that he could retain only one-third or one-quarter of his produce.

By the beginning of the twentieth century Hungarian agriculture had more or less passed the crisis. In the decade before the outbreak of the First World War there was another upswing. The internal market of the Monarchy was expanding, and from 1906 onwards,

*Agricultural Production in Hungary  
1871-1915*

	Wheat	Rye	Barley	Oat	Maize	Potatoes	Sugar-beets	Cattle turnips	Others
Amount (1,000 q) *									
1871-1875	12,976	7,603	6,648	5,487	11,532	8,396	2,416	3,669	1,348
1896-1900	35,023	10,785	12,011	10,460	30,795	36,965	16,056	36,723	1,675
1911-1915	41,017	12,439	15,116	12,588	42,098	51,673	38,118	60,490	1,824
Crop yields (q/hectare)									
1871-1875	6.13	6.12	7.37	5.42	7.40	22.97	123.48	83.90	—
1896-1900	11.36	10.50	12.13	11.07	14.61	80.09	209.77	254.22	—
1911-1915	12.39	11.50	13.62	11.75	17.15	83.37	246.53	295.79	—

\* 1 quintal (q) = 2 cwt.

high protective tariffs safeguarded the interests of agricultural producers, particularly the big Hungarian landowners, their monopoly position and profits. Differences and tensions were reduced by the general prosperity, and further incentives were given to the development of intensive farming.

By and large, agriculture in Hungary developed quickly within the common market of the Monarchy. In addition to favourable market prospects and the improved credit system, a great part was played by the price structure, too. During the entire period, the price scissors favoured agriculture at the expense of industry, that is, the trend of prices was favourable to agriculture. Compared with feudal conditions, capitalism increased both the quantity and the productivity of the land by leaps and bounds, driving the peasants to produce more. This was a decisive factor in the agricultural development of the period.

The role of the market of the Monarchy in promoting agriculture has been mentioned above; it should be added, however, that secure sales, the high protective tariffs and a monopoly market also tended to preserve the existing conditions of Hungarian agriculture. In the period of the Dual Monarchy the unjust division of land hardly changed, the economic power of the large estates even increased. Disproportions in the production pattern were but slightly evened out.

The development due to capitalism has also been mentioned above. Let us add that its contribution to development did not manifest itself everywhere. In a large portion of the country it asserted itself only in a limited form, interwoven with feudal elements, and in the eastern sections of the country it appeared fairly late. Backward methods of cultivation and distribution, low yields in comparison with Western Europe, the misery of most of the peasants, capitalist exploitation aggravated by feudal remnants weighing on the poor peasantry and agrarian proletariat—these were the characteristics of Hungarian agriculture, even in the years preceding the World War.

### **Industrial Development**

Modern industry developed rather late, only at the end of the last century, but from then onwards it was on a large scale. The Compromise created promising conditions for the development of industry as well as agriculture by facilitating consolidation and the establishment of a favourable credit system. After 1867 many new firms were established, but the crisis of 1873 swept away the great majority. The

second, and more lasting wave of industrialization started in the eighties, reaching its peak and golden age between 1890 and 1913.

The trend of industrial development was determined by the institutions of the previous era and by the economic-political conditions of the Dual Monarchy. The food industry still dominated, and within this the flour industry was the only one able to surpass its Austrian competitors and achieve European importance. The 1.5 million quintals annual output of the mills at the time of the Compromise rose to 16 million at the beginning of the century, and to 24 million before the war; of this 6 and 8 million quintals respectively were exported.

The production of basic materials, such as coal and iron ore, and the iron industry remained the basis of industrialization. Coal production rose from 7 million quintals at the time of the Compromise to 57 million at the end of the century, and to 102 million quintals before the war. The rise was not so much due to the somewhat sluggish mechanization, but rather to extensive expansion and the discovery of new seams. Iron ore production in the same period rose from 3 million quintals to 16, then 20.6 million quintals, while crude iron production rose from 1 to 4.7, then 6.2 million quintals. By means of considerable reconstruction and modern foundry methods, steel production made tremendous advances from the nineties onwards, reaching 8 million quintals before the war.

The machine industry made good progress in its traditional lines, producing transport equipment and agricultural machinery. In addition to the locomotives, railway cars, milling equipment and threshing machinery of Ganz and MÁVAG there later appeared the Kandó electric locomotive, the Diesel engine and the steam turbine. In the first decade of our century there began the first domestic production of automobiles, lorries and tractors; and immediately before the war the first Hungarian aeroplane was turned out. The pivot of the machine industry, however, the machine tool industry, made little headway, being unable to compete with the West, and producing only one quarter of the home requirement.

Two new branches of industry also emerged in the period: the electrical and chemical industries. The former rose to international importance through a series of Hungarian inventions, especially in the manufacture of electric bulbs; the latter rose to prominence through the refinery of crude oil and the manufacture of fertilizers.

There were advances in mechanization, in the quantity of production and in scale in the timber, paper and leather industries. These branches of industry, however, did not advance beyond primary pro-



cessing, producing only semi-finished goods. At the beginning of the century the textile industry, handicapped for over a century by the dominance of its Austrian rival, made considerable headway, owing chiefly to plentiful state subsidies. The number of factories and machines, and the amount of production, multiplied several times during the two decades before the World War, but the industry still did not produce more than one-third of home requirements.

The following figures are significant of the 50-year development of Hungarian manufacturing industry: the number of factories rose from a couple of dozen at the time of the Compromise to 5,000 at the outbreak of the war. Power production rose from about 10-15 thousand horse power to 886 thousand HP. The number of workers rose from 400 thousand in 1880 to a million, and the number of factory workers from 110 thousand to 600 thousand. The value of production doubled from the end of the century to the outbreak of the war to 3,300 million crowns. The average annual rate of growth was 5.4 per cent, surpassing the 4.6 per cent average of the Western European countries and also that of the Balkan countries. The industrialization, launched after the bourgeois revolution, heavily dominated by the food industry, became somewhat more balanced in structure during the course of the period; before the war the food industry supplied 30 per cent of the gross industrial product, and heavy industry (including mining) 47 per cent, while light industry supplied 23 per cent.

A more significant change than the modification in the horizontal structure of industry came in its vertical structure, in the degree of concentration. Capitalist manufacturing industry sprang up alongside and above the old-fashioned, fragmented, small-scale production. While in 1873 there were about 170 industrial companies, with funds of 200 million crowns, in 1913 there were more than 1,000, with funds of 1,500 million crowns. Foreign capital played an important part in industrial development. In 1880 about two-thirds of the industrial plants were in the hands of foreign capitalists, around 1900 one half, and just before the war, one-third.

The late beginnings and the financing role played by foreign and domestic bank-capital promoted the emergence of heavy industry in a highly concentrated form, employing the most modern methods of production. At the beginning of the twentieth century large factories were only 0.5 per cent of all existing business concerns, yet their output comprised two-thirds of total production, and they employed 44 per cent of the workers. The concentration of capital and production was especially strong in mining and metallurgy. In coal mining five firms, in iron production three firms controlled the overwhelming

share of production. The high rate of concentration furthered tendencies towards monopoly, which the bourgeoisie at home and abroad did not neglect to exploit. At the end of the nineteenth century there emerged the so-called 'joint' Austro-Hungarian cartels, such as the iron cartel, and the 'independent' cartels, such as the coal cartel. There were also many other closely or loosely connected cartels, about 80 in number, before the First World War. The power of the banks and industrial monopolies was far-reaching. Prices were fixed, the terms of sale were regulated and agreements reached for the division of the market. These agreements met with temporary success and seriously affected economic life, without being able to eliminate the contradictions of capitalist competition.

The development of capitalist manufacturing, together with the competition of its Austrian rivals, inflicted a heavy blow on domestic crafts industry. Certain traditional branches, such as those producing consumer goods, dwindled to nothing. Crafts industry declined rapidly from the middle of the last century onwards. Modern technology and big industry, however, not only ruined but also regenerated the function of small-scale industry. In some branches, such as repair, maintenance and luxury goods, the position of small industry stabilized itself. The employment of simpler combustion and electrical engines and small machinery furnished new possibilities for the crafts.

The development of industry in the period of the Dual Monarchy was very considerable. Yet contemporary Hungarian opinion held—and this view has been widely accepted up to the present in Hungarian historical writing—that the competition with Austrian industry exercised a crippling influence on it; that is, it was confined to the branches working up raw materials, and the Austrian bourgeoisie deliberately prevented the development of industry in Hungary. Those who hold this view insist that the backwardness and limitation of industry in Hungary clearly prove the 'colonial' or 'semi-colonial' status of the country. We do not wish to suggest that these opinions are without foundation. There is no doubt that more advanced Austrian industry did prevent the development of certain Hungarian industries, especially light industry, and that the common market mainly served the interests of the food industry. It is equally true that Austrian industrial circles tried to oust their growing Hungarian rivals through measures of economic policy, which from the end of the last century were counteracted by the purposeful support given to industry by the Hungarian government.

In the relationship between Austrian and Hungarian industry, nevertheless, it was not subjective motives that mattered but the

spontaneous interactions of the economic community between a more highly developed and a more backward country. The proper historical question is not whether this partnership had advantages and disadvantages—it obviously had—but rather, in what proportion these were to each other. Purely from the viewpoint of profitability and capital accumulation it can be said that the advantages accruing from a food industry able to compete in the world market were greater than the disadvantages owing to a light industry (textiles) quite backward even by Eastern European standards. From the viewpoint of industry as a whole and of social effects, however, the food industry could not make up for the deficiencies in light industry, which was very closely linked with the other branches of the economy, and employed a larger and steadier labour force. In the short run, and from the point of view of launching the industrial revolution, the advantages of the economic partnership are obvious; but in the long run, and from the point of view of the organic and balanced development of industry, the disadvantages seem more obvious.

The same conclusion, to a certain degree, can be extended to the whole of economic development in the period of the Dual Monarchy. The free exchange of goods within the framework of an economic community provided great comparative cost-advantages to both parties. Both in Austria and in Hungary, considering the natural and economic conditions, the most suitable and profitable branches of industry were established and thrived. In Hungary, from the viewpoint of the relatively quick development of capitalism and the profit mechanism of the capitalist sector, the economic partnership proved definitely advantageous. In the conditions of Eastern Europe it was especially advantageous that capital imports and rapid internal accumulation through the market of the Monarchy, amply financed agriculture, transport and the credit system even as early as the 'foundation' stage of capitalism.

At the same time, upon survey of the entire half century development of this economic system, it can also be concluded that the partnership with a more developed Austria helped to retard the transformation of the economic and social structure to preserve social conditions and relations of production inherited from feudalism. There existed side by side in dualist Hungary a Western-level capitalist sector and Eastern European, semi-feudal agrarian areas, a few thousand modern agricultural operations and several million backward peasant farms. There existed a high degree of concentration, with technologically advanced industrial plants and monopoly organizations, and widespread, primitive small-scale production. There was a unified imperial market

with national markets developing within it; there were both Austro-Hungarian finance capital and growing national bourgeoisies. All of these elements developed and fought one another within the same system.

It was on this contradiction-filled economic system that multi-national Hungary's emerging bourgeois society—with all the conflicts attending this transformation—was erected.

### **Hungarian Society in the Early Twentieth Century**

On the 325,411 sq.km. territory of the 'Hungarian Empire', there were, at the time of the Compromise, 15.5 million inhabitants. This figure had risen to 20.9 million in 1910. This one-third increase was about the European average; it is accounted for by urbanization (primarily the phenomenal growth of Budapest), by the security of a half century era of peace, by an improvement in public health and by the general advance of bourgeois civilization. Behind the population increase and the statistics of cultural advance there was much, however, on the debit side—large-scale emigration, the widespread occurrence of tuberculosis, one of the highest mortality rates in Europe, and the hopeless misery of the poor. Emigration was especially large in this period. The overwhelming majority of the emigrants, 86 per cent, or about two million people, headed towards the United States, which held out the promise of a secure livelihood. Of the close to two million people some 600,000–700,000 were Hungarians, the rest being Slovak, Ukrainian, South Slavic and other nationalities. The Hungarians settled down mainly in the area of New York, Cleveland, Cincinnati and Detroit where they found employment in mining and heavy industry; there they formed national communities. Although the majority were poor peasants and workers, the emigrants also included professional people, engineers, scholars etc., who were to play a significant role in the economic and cultural life of the United States.

Thanks to spontaneous assimilation and forced Magyarization the Hungarians increased more rapidly than the nationalities. At the time of the Compromise they composed about 40 per cent of the population, but this proportion rose to 48 per cent before the war, or 52 per cent when Hungary alone is considered, without Croatia-Slavonia. Against this the Germans numbered 9.8 per cent, the Slovaks 9.4 per cent, the Rumanians 14 per cent, the South Slavs 14 per cent and the Carpatho-Ukrainians 2.3 per cent. Magyarization, however, hardly touched the

main bodies of the nationalities, nor did it alter the multinational character of the country. The bulk of the Rumanians, Serbs and Ukrainians adhered to their national Orthodox Churches (and in part to the Greek Catholic rite). Most Germans and many Slovaks were Lutherans. Two-thirds of the Hungarians were Roman Catholic, while one-third were Protestant. Jews made up 4.5 per cent of the population.

The distribution of the population according to occupation followed the contours of the economic structure. During the age of dualism the proportion of those engaged in agriculture declined from three-quarters of the population to less than two-thirds (64 per cent), while the number of those engaged in trade and industry rose from one-tenth to nearly one-fourth (23.3 per cent). It is typical of the backwardness of the country that the ratio of people engaged in the liberal professions and the civil service did not rise above 3.3 per cent of the total.

As to the nature of employment, there were two million independent earners in agriculture (35 per cent) and 3.5 million labourers (64 per cent). In industry and trade there were 640 thousand self-employed (31 per cent) and 1.3 million workers (63.4 per cent). Among the independent 'landowners' the mass of the poor peasants were allotted only 5.8 per cent of the land. Half of the country was owned by a negligible proportion of the population, that is to say, 9,000 big landowners.

### Social Stratification

In Hungarian society during the age of dualism, the dividing line was not so much between the propertied and the unpropertied, but between those who were considered gentlemen and those who were not. In the first category belong those who possessed landed estates, titles of nobility, family trees, or the diploma entitling them to an officer's commission. The second category comprised the peasant masses, workers, the lower sections of society, that is to say, 'the lower classes'. The chasm between the two was unbridgeable.

Even among the gentlemen only the aristocracy and the landowners belonging to the nobility counted as 'real' gentlemen. The great landowning aristocracy of a few hundred families preserved in this period both their wealth and standing. The aristocracy occupied a leading position at court, in the diplomatic corps, in parliament and in the political parties. They moved about freely in the worlds of

science, art and finance, as well as in the casinos. The creative powers of the aristocracy, however, became almost completely exhausted in this period. Their leading role in the socio-political world became almost 'honorary', as were their titles as bank directors. The majority of the high aristocracy lived a parasitic existence; even the active, capable members profited from their position in public life without assuming leadership in any sphere.

The real backbone of the big landowning class consisted of 'the 1,000 *hold* owners'. These comprised 4,000-5,000 wealthy members of the former middle nobility, with their roots deep in the landowning class, who occupied the leading positions in government, parliament and the county organizations. For the most part they managed their estates themselves. The wealthier introduced capitalist management successfully. The less affluent, on the other hand, struggled constantly against increasing difficulties, and by the end of the century merged with the declining class of the gentry. 'The 1,000 *hold* owners' co-existed well with free-market capitalism during the period of the boom. During the decades of the agrarian crisis, however, in the wake of the strengthening of big capital, factory industry and the capitalist credit system their material interests came into increasing conflicts with the bourgeoisie and with liberalism. It was from their ranks that there emerged the leaders and the most influential figures of anti-liberal agrarianism.

During this period the enriched great bourgeoisie joined ranks, at first behind, then alongside the ruling landowner class. Hungary's great bourgeoisie evolved in smaller part from those wealthy members of the old urban-patrician bourgeoisie who had been clever enough to make the switch to free-market capitalism, and in part from industrialists and merchants who had immigrated from other countries. The greater part, and the nucleus of the great bourgeoisie, consisted of the Jewish bourgeoisie, who, beginning as modest corn-merchants and money-lenders, had within a few decades become big businessmen, industrialists and bankers. This substantial group of the bourgeoisie now profited from the fact that under feudalism they could not be owners of land, office-holders, members of guilds or possess civic rights, and because they were exempt from feudal obligations, they could devote themselves entirely to exploiting the possibilities offered by free trade and capitalism. It was thus that various sections of the Jewish bourgeoisie—at the bottom, the village dealers, financiers and intellectuals, and at the top, directors of banks and trading companies—filled leading positions in the new capitalist economy.

At the pinnacle of the finance-bourgeoisie stood about fifty families,

with many close ties to one another, with wealth rivalling that of the aristocracy and with even greater actual economic power. Their political and social influence, however, was considerably less. Although many of their numbers acquired titles of nobility, gained the rank of baron and became members of the Upper House, and of the upper ten thousand, these financiers could only play the part of the silent partner in political leadership and their power could only be exercised indirectly. Their social influence extended itself over a well-to-do and cultivated but very thin and uninfluential layer of Hungarian society—the urban mercantile and industrial bourgeoisie, and the bourgeois intelligentsia.

The 'middle class' comprised members of the declining landed class, the rising middle bourgeoisie, clerks, officials and intellectuals. The most influential section of the Hungarian 'middle class' was the gentry. This term, transplanted from the English, referred to the middle nobility which was declining in political and economic influence. In a liberal era this group regarded the term 'nobility' as crude and reactionary. The term 'gentry', like the term 'middle nobility' which it replaced, was not used to define a class according to fortune and estate. This term covered not only a few '1,000 *hold*' families, the several-hundred-*hold* medium-sized estates and the small gentleman-farmers and vintners, but also those intellectuals forced into civil service or other careers who could display a good family tree. The élite of the gentry was made up of those landowners who were able to hold on to a considerable portion of the ancient estate in the midst of the constant economic upheavals, though the present offered little chance for new acquisitions or energetic upkeep. The state apparatus, the county administrations and a good portion of the city administrations were permeated by a thick network of gentry kinships and by the interests of the landowning families; one-third to one half of ministerial posts, three-quarters of the county offices and a significant portion of the judiciary and the officers' corps were recruited from the gentry.

The survival of the gentry and their influence on the formation of the 'middle class' clearly shows the contradiction of the bourgeois era. The 'middle class' played a double role in Western society. It absorbed the emerging elements of the lower classes and supplied newcomers to the leading section; it furnished support to the social system but also supplied the democratic opposition in any political system. At the turn of the century, the Hungarian gentry were not yet ready to assimilate those who came from below; on the other hand, they tried not so much to join the upper class as to survive and preserve their position. They supported the Dual Monarchy not only socially, but

also politically, and even their opposition was not democratic, but anti-liberal and right-wing. Hungary's social development was seriously hampered by the fact that 'the middle classes' were formed by the gentry in their own image, and so, instead of becoming a forward-looking bourgeois section of society, they formed a decadent, quasi-noble and anti-democratic layer in society.

The heterogeneous Hungarian bourgeoisie was linked with 'the historical middle classes' by interest and custom. The quick assimilation of the German and Jewish bourgeoisie followed similar lines. New and old immigrants were equally busy in putting down roots and getting rich. For some time to come this tied them to the large estates and agricultural commodity production. Only at the beginning of the twentieth century, with the second and third generation, did the desire to be free of gentry leadership and feudal-nationalist traditions appear. Only then did the germs of a real 'middle class' of the radical, anti-feudal bourgeois type emerge, mainly from the metropolitan professional intelligentsia and scholars.

For the socio-political character of the middle strata the development of the Hungarian petty bourgeoisie is of extreme importance. The decline of feudalism placed the backward artisans and shopkeepers of this stratum in a difficult situation. In no position to improve their conditions, they suffered from the competition of both Austrian and Hungarian capitalists and were unable to take advantage of the development of capitalism. The nucleus of the petty bourgeoisie were the several hundred thousand handicraftsmen and small tradesmen of the towns and villages, with many declassed landless noblemen among them. Their only chance of survival lay in work in small backward workshops, above which they rarely succeeded in rising. The petty bourgeoisie had always been anti-Austrian and in favour of independence. In time most of them became hostile to Hungarian capitalism and to the upper bourgeoisie, and these became the mass base of the anti-liberal, nationalist landowning opposition.

The most numerous social class was that of the peasantry, separated from the other classes by its very appearance and by its way of life and position in society. There were a million and a half landowning peasants, and two million agricultural labourers; together these, with their dependents, made up nearly two-thirds of the whole population. Capitalism further increased the stratification which had already emerged in feudal society, and it slowly disintegrated the old serfdom. During the succeeding decades there emerged a class of rich peasants from the ranks of those who had possessed larger plots at the time of the emancipation. About a quarter million medium peasants, on the

other hand, clung tenaciously to the land allotted to them. The majority of the small peasantry, with large families, afflicted by unfavourable economic conditions and the lack of land, were rapidly being impoverished and their land split up among their descendants. The small peasantry, with many degrees of dwarf holdings, gradually shaded into the poor peasantry. The latter, about 1.2 million families, paid for their tiny possessions with drudgery and penury.

The peasantry, who were 99 per cent of the landowners, possessed only 56 per cent of the land, about 80 per cent of livestock, and only one-quarter of the agricultural machinery. Within the peasantry the small peasants and dwarf-holders with less than 6 hectares of land made up two-thirds of the peasantry but possessed only one-quarter of all peasant land and 40-45 per cent of the livestock.

At the bottom of the social ladder, below gentlemen, bourgeoisie and peasants, vegetated the vast host of the agricultural proletariat. Though great waves of emigration decreased their numbers, yet at the beginning of the century they were still two million strong, constituting 40 per cent of the agrarian labour force. They either submitted to their fate as labourers or sought new masters and a better fate from year to year as seasonal or migratory labour.

The peasantry was strongly divided not only according to the fundamental class stratification but also according to nationality and degree of *embourgeoisement*; in addition, there were differences between regions and forms of settlement. Significant differences in farming methods and way of life divided the Transdanubian and the Transiszan peasants, those of Upper Hungary and of Southern Hungary, those of Transylvania and of the south-eastern region, and even within regions there were various types. A genuine farmer-peasantry was to be found in Western Transdanubia, in the environs of the large cities and in some particular zones of the Great Plain. Elsewhere the masses of the peasantry bogged down on the road to *embourgeoisement* or to proletarianization, never attaining either. Even the accumulating elements of the landed peasantry adapted for the most part to traditional forms and imitated the life-style of the small gentleman-farmers. And millions of the deprived, tied to the chief source of their livelihood—the soil—lived in constant uncertainty and without being definitively proletarian; nor did they settle in the cities, where they would have become industrial workers.

Remnants of a former communal life still united them. The large estate pressed them together, yet internal differences separated the sections of the peasantry, preventing a united socio-political stand. The majority of the 14-million-strong peasantry was, during this

period, an anti-feudal force, a potential basis for democratic change. It was one of the peculiar contradictions of Hungary's social development that because of the stagnation of this mighty force, its divided nature and the nationalistic influence of the ruling élite, no revolutionary democratic trend emerged on a nation-wide scale. It was only among the industrial working class emerging at this time that this trend could develop.

Before the bourgeois revolution, only 80 thousand guild apprentices and journeymen, 35 thousand miners and 20 thousand manufacturing workers were to be found in the country. Owing to the low level of preindustrial production, the base of the proletariat was extraordinarily limited in scope. Skilled labour did not yet exist, and there were not many machine-workers. Industry could only partially rely on native labour resources. Owing to the structure of Hungarian industrial development, the pivot of the labour force was formed by well-paid skilled workers, who were largely immigrants. This force of skilled labour was supplemented by a smaller force of machine-workers, surrounded by a large, brutally exploited mass, both Hungarian and non-Hungarian, recruited from city and village day-labourers. This sort of stratification of the working class strongly affected the workers' movement. It was the skilled workers, with their internationalist traditions, who were most receptive to organization, but the sectors concentrating the most day-labourers, namely, the agricultural labourers, construction workers and miners, were most prone to violent outbreaks of rebellion. The revolutionary trend of the workers' movement emerged because of the great exploitation of the proletariat and their complete lack of political rights. Behind the ever-recurring spirit of reformism, on the other hand, was the élite body of better-paid skilled labour.

The number of industrial workers increased rapidly. Before the First World War their number reached one million. More than half of them worked in big factories, 30 per cent being concentrated in the capital. The ratio of women and children to men was comparatively high, about 40 per cent. The multinational character of the country was reflected in the composition of the workers, the number of Slovak and German workers being especially high. The assimilating force of town and industry was, however, extremely strong; within a few decades the immigrants became Hungarian, the ratio of Hungarians to the nationalities growing to 60 per cent throughout the country and to 80 per cent in Budapest. The pay and working conditions of the workers improved little. The 12-14 hour workday at the time of the Compromise was reduced, after constant demands, by only 1-2 hours.



There was a 10-hour working day in the capital before the war; in the country and in mining 12 hours were still worked. Only the most elementary conditions of social welfare were achieved: compulsory sickness and accident insurance, no work on Sundays, the prohibition of child labour (little observed) and safety measures (only formally kept). Wages, as a result of constant struggles, fluctuated. Better wages in the 1890s were reduced by the crisis of the early twentieth century, and an increase in 1905-6 was debased by constantly mounting inflation. Real wages did not rise significantly from the nineties to the war.

At the beginning of the century, trade unionism made marked advances. The great national unions were organized at this time. About 20-25 per cent of all the workers were members, but their influence was greater than their numbers suggest. Whole trades or cities, including tens of thousands of workers, were mobilized by some of the greater strikes, and the Social Democratic Party was able to mobilize hundreds of thousands for some of its political actions.

The class structure of society basically determined the main lines of the political division, too. Almost the whole of Hungarian society, down to the working classes, was united by the idea of the 'national state', based on territorial integrity. At the same time, however, the concept interpreted in different ways, dividing the nationalists into two separate camps: those professing the ideas of 1867 and those of 1848. Both were opposed by the nationalities and the slowly developing democratic camp (including the working class and various sections of the peasantry), which became stronger and better organized only in the first decade of the twentieth century.

### Cultural Life

During this period Hungary was the scene of significant cultural developments. As a matter of fact, it was during this half century that a modern public education system came into being. The foundation was provided by the Public Education Act of 1868 mentioned above. As against the 9,000 elementary schools of the pre-1848 period, which were almost exclusively run by the clergy and were staffed by a single teacher, i.e. pupils no matter what grade all attended the same class, and the 13,000 schools at the time of the Compromise in 1867, in 1913-14 there were 17,000 elementary schools operating; of these 5,000 were run by the state or the local communes, and 7,200 had several teachers in charge of the different grades. In 1870 more than

half (51.5 per cent) of the children of school age were not attending school; in the years immediately preceding the war this figure had dropped to 15 per cent. Thus it can be said that during this period it was rather the intensity and level of education that was raised, and not the number of schools. This is reflected in the significant growth in the number of those who could both read and write: in 1870, 68 per cent of the population above the age of 6 could neither read nor write, whereas by 1913 this figure had dropped to 33 per cent.

In the same period the number of secondary schools grew from 185 to 264, and the number of students from 35,000 to 80,000. In addition, there were 92 teachers' training schools, as well as several hundred industrial and commercial vocational schools.

In the first half of the nineteenth century there was only one university in the capital. Following the Compromise, four new universities were founded: a Technical University, which was established as a college in 1857 and was accorded university status in 1871; the University of Kolozsvár, founded in 1872, and those of Debrecen and Pozsony, both in 1912. It should be added that the latter two began their activities only during the war and even then were only modest institutions. The number of university students in 1914 exceeded 13,000, about 13 per cent of them coming from well-to-do families with landed property, while 73 per cent represented the middle classes and the intelligentsia, 11 per cent the peasants and a mere 3 per cent were the sons of workers.

The development of secondary and higher education was largely responsible for the fact that the number of public servants and employees with higher degrees, 115,000 at the time of the Compromise, jumped to 200,000 just before the war, and that a technical and medical intelligentsia almost absent before, began to appear. The number of office-holders and professionals was 340,000 in 1910.

Progress was recorded in the field of science as well. In the period in question, quite a few scientific and public health institutions, societies, museums and libraries were established (of the 45 Hungarian museums of any importance 38, of 100 public libraries with a stock of over 10,000 volumes, 45 were founded after the Compromise). It was at this time that the Hungarian schools of mathematics and medicine made an international reputation, and Hungarian scientists made significant contributions to the different branches of the social and technical sciences; among them were Loránd Eötvös, Ottó Herman, Kálmán Kandó, Donát Bánki, Ottó Bláthy, Fülöp Lénárd and Richárd Zsigmondy. Outstanding work was done in philology and the historical sciences as well. At the same time, however, there



was a serious lag in philosophy and in the disciplines which had been in the van of progress in the nineteenth century, such as sociology, economics, biology, chemistry and other natural sciences. Public thinking was dominated by idealism and the tradition of nationalism sustained by the landed gentry, and this circumstance hindered the spread of a modern materialist thinking based on sociology and the natural sciences.

In the arts, much good work was done in stimulating patronage and developing public appreciation. It was literature, primarily the rich tradition of poetry, that produced original and lasting works. During the period the fine arts, especially painting, succeeded in attaining the same European standard of taste as literature. To name just a few painters of the period: Mibály Munkácsy, Bertalan Székely, Pál Szinyei Merse, Károly Ferenczy, Simon Hollósy, Tivadar Csontváry, József Rippl-Rónai. Music education was started, an Opera House established, concerts popularized and theatrical performances initiated; all this contributed to the spread and maturing of the musical and theatrical culture of the educated middle classes. Compared with the single theatre operating under the absolutist government, there were nine permanent theatres in Budapest in 1913—including two opera companies—and another 38 theatrical ensembles performing in the provinces. Their repertoires included a great many modern social dramas besides foreign and domestic classical plays. It should be mentioned, however, that the greatest audiences were attracted to operettas, musical comedies about peasant life, light comedies in the French style and cabaret theatre, which began to flourish at this time. In raising the level of public education—and stimulating the nationalistic spirit of public opinion at the same time—a leading role was played by newspapers and journals, which multiplied on an unprecedented scale. Compared with the 200 newspapers in existence at the time of the Compromise, by 1914 their number had jumped to about 900; the number of regular subscribers amounted to 230 million.

In the development of Hungarian culture up to the end of the nineteenth century, the greatest influence was exercised by the German and Austrian cultures, although the beneficial effect of other Western European cultures was also perceptible. In the second half of the century, the educated classes turned with great interest to English literature and dramas. Shakespeare still headed the list of the most popular playwrights, and his works were translated by the most prominent Hungarian poets, such as Vörösmarty, Petőfi and Arany; even Kossuth had a go at translating *Macbeth*. The romantic poets

and writers of the early nineteenth century and the Victorian age, such as Byron, Shelley, Keats, Scott, Thackeray and Dickens, enjoyed great popularity; among contemporary writers, mention should be made of Wells, Galsworthy, Shaw, Wilde. Personal contacts, however, were sporadic and casual, and were maintained mainly by aristocrats and individual politicians who regarded the British system of parliament as their political ideal.

The turn of the twentieth century brought a noticeable change as the rising urban bourgeoisie and intelligentsia consciously turned towards France and Britain. The regular teaching of the English language and literature was begun at the universities and made good progress in secondary schools as well. The radical bourgeois intelligentsia, reacting against the conservatism of the nobility and German influence, turned with great enthusiasm and interest towards Western science. Their ideals were free-thinking, in which they regarded the French as their model, and scientific reasoning, in which they wanted to follow the British. The works and ideas of Darwin and Herbert Spencer had a great influence on them.

## 2. THE DECLINE OF THE MONARCHY (1890-1914)

### **The End of Stability.**

#### **Social Democratic and Agrarian Socialist Movement**

The peaceful period created by the Compromise depended on a favourable international situation and on the temporary balance of the national and social forces within the Monarchy. The last third of the century, the great moulding and creative period of capitalism, also changed the balance of power when it transformed the social structure. A new major power emerged in Central Europe, imperialist Germany, whose alliance brought her support against Russia on the one hand, but enemies in the West on the other. After the turn of the century, the Monarchy's traditional Anglocentric alliance system was upset. The various nations of the Monarchy were carried by the eastward advance of capitalism into the mainstream of modern economic development, and by this process their national consciousness was strengthened. At the same time the relations of dependence within the Monarchy began to shift. Differences came to the surface between the ruling nations, the Austrians and the Hungarians; the national movements of Czechs, South Slavs, Rumanians and other peoples gained in force. New social classes appeared on the stage, with new demands.

In Hungary, the upsetting of the balance of 1867 manifested itself first in the strengthening of the national opposition. The Szapáry government, which continued, in unchanged form, where Tisza had left off, tried at the outset to counteract the concentration of the opposition by economic achievements and minor reforms. The regulation of the Danube at the Iron Gate was completed, and the state budget was balanced. The currency reform of Sándor Wekerle in 1892 introduced the gold crown in place of the silver florin, thus placing Hungary among the countries with a stable currency. The same government introduced the first welfare measures, such as compulsory health insurance and Sunday as a day of rest, recognizing the grave problems of the working class and attempting to make them less acute.

The workers' movement in Hungary was given new impetus by the formation of the Second International. Its Congress of 1889 discussed the internal difficulties of the General Workers' Party and called upon

the Austrian party to support the Hungarian movement. A conference held in the autumn of the same year at Pozsony, with the participation of Viktor Adler, launched the workers' movement in Hungary on new lines. The Hungarian tinsmith Pál Engelmann, who received his political education in the radical groups of the Austrian and German working-class movements, was elected to the leadership. The new leadership laid stress on organizational work and socialist agitation. In 1890, for the first time in Hungary, 60,000 workers celebrated May Day. After a year's work the General Workers' Party was reorganized, and renamed as the Social Democratic Party of Hungary (SDP). This event opened a new phase in the workers' movement.

The first congress of 7 December 1890 adopted the Hainfeld programme of the Austrian party. In this act was reflected the long intention of the socialist leadership that all workers' movements in the Monarchy be governed by the same principles. The so-called 'Declaration of Principle' designated, as the final aim of the party, the public ownership of the means of production, which would signify the liberation of the working class. The programme did not specify the means by which power should be gained. Like the other parties of the Second International, it held that in the course of time, the sharpening of the inner contradictions of capitalism would create by itself the conditions by which the then powerful and organized host of the working class could assume power. The topical portion of the programme contained demands for democratic civil rights and reforms for the safeguarding of workers. It demanded universal suffrage and democracy, but failed to issue a statement on the most important question in Hungary: the radical abolition of feudal remnants.

The new policy of the SDP was both a result of and a stimulus to the strengthening of the workers' movement. In the early nineties the party encouraged the development of the trade union movement and workers' societies. It was in those years that the idea of socialism reached the villages, first of all among the agrarian proletariat of the Great Plain. The poor people of the village came to know the ideas of socialism through the agitation of itinerant workers and navvies under the influence of the workers' movements of the cities. At times the party sent speakers and newspapers to the labourers of the 'Stormy Corner' (the area formed by three counties near the confluence of the Tisza and Maros rivers: Békés, Csanád and Csongrád). In this region, with its revolutionary traditions, there were workingmen's circles as early as the beginning of 1891. On May Day a banner, with the slogan of 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' embroidered on it, was hoisted on the roof of the agricultural labourers' association in Orosháza.

During the festive day in Orosháza, on the next day in Békéscsaba, and on 21 June in Battonya, there were demonstrations for higher wages, better working conditions and rights, and extraordinarily violent and bloody skirmishes followed between the agrarian proletariat and the gendarmerie. The government was able to put down several weeks of turbulence in the Stormy Corner only with the dispatch of soldiers, gendarmes and a commissioner with emergency powers, who imposed martial law.

At the beginning of the nineties, the country's most insecure and oppressed but already concentrated and unity-conscious day-labourers took part in increasingly violent actions. Their organizations lived and thrived as the village offshoot of the socialist workers' movement. Their demands were aimed against capitalist exploitation laden with feudal remnants and for improvement of the situation of the proletariat. In the early stages the partitioning of land was not mentioned; at most they contemplated the socialization of the large estates. The agrarian socialist movement made it plain to all that the socialist movement in Hungary could also rely on the wide basis of the poor peasantry. From this same perception the ruling classes drew the conclusion that the movement should be stifled at all costs and that the penetration of socialism into the village must be stopped. At the same time they also deliberated conservative means for alleviating the tension.

The SDP was faced with serious problems as a result of persecution by the authorities following the movements of the agrarian socialists. The leading group, aiming at class struggle, continued with organization in both town and country, fighting back successfully for a time the trends at moderation within the party. The counter-attack of the leaders of the sick-fund, who were not squeamish in their measures, succeeded, at the end of 1892, in overthrowing Engelmann and his followers, and the latter were even expelled from the party. For years there were fierce struggles between the two factions, in the centre of which, apart from personal dissensions, was the question as to what tactics should be adopted in the Hungarian socialist movement. The conference on unity in 1894 indeed ended the split in the party, and in the person of Ignác Silherberg a representative of the militant group was placed at the head, but the differences between the two contesting groups was only temporarily brought to a standstill.

The agrarian socialist movement turned the attention of the SDP to the agrarian question. The congress of 1894 accepted, among other things, an agrarian programme. Starting from the Marxist theories on the concentration of capital, the superiority of large units of produc-

tion, and the proletarianization of the peasantry, it stated that landed property should pass into public ownership and that the Social Democratic movement was neither interested in nor able to save and preserve the peasantry, and thus rejected the partitioning of the land. The programme was in keeping with the theoretical views of the Second International and was not contrary to the demands raised in practice at that time by the class struggle in Hungary.

### **The Church Controversy**

While the idea of socialism captivated the proletariat of town and country, among the middle classes and the ruling circles the idea of national opposition prevailed. Early in 1892, the Moderate Opposition, Count Albert Apponyi's party, hacked by the conservative big land-owners and the élite of the gentry intelligentsia, changed its name to that of the National Party. It issued a new programme, in which it announced that it would 'extend' the achievements of the Compromise in a national spirit, a slogan later to become commonplace. The programme wrapped its insignificant contents in inflated terms; there were modest demands for a Hungarian royal household, a Hungarian coat of arms and the use of Hungarian in military instruction. In day to day politics the National Party made approaches to the Independents, who were becoming more popular.

While the intensification of the class struggle imposed a burden mainly on the police, the growth of national opposition was the government's serious political headache. As minor reforms were of little avail, the Szapáry government was obliged to resort to an issue long rusting but welcome to liberals: the reform of church policy.

The Church-State relations left over from the Middle Ages were indeed ripe for review. Even at the end of the nineteenth century, the Church was responsible for such important functions as marriage, divorce and the registration of births and deaths. Education, too, was mainly in the hands of the Church. The Catholic Church forbade mixed marriage, and only granted a dispensation if the non-Catholic party guaranteed that his or her offspring would be brought up in the Catholic faith. This stipulation was contrary to the law of the state, according to which a son followed his father's and a daughter his mother's religion. The Catholic Church disregarded the law and continued to get new converts, causing friction both with the state and with Protestants.

In the summer of 1892 the government decided to put an end to the

anomalies in Church-State matters, mainly for tactical reasons. These reforms in church policy seemed an opportune issue to break up the traditional constitutional division into an ideological division along the lines of liberals versus conservatives. At the outset the government hesitated to provoke the clergy and was inclined to compromise. About this time, however, powerful conservative tendencies emerged within the Church. Supported by the Vatican, they were directed against liberal government policies, especially in the countries of the Triple Alliance. To avoid a conflict, Szapáry favoured the introduction only of non-compulsory civil marriage. When the clerical camp considered even this too much, the liberals, on the other hand, found it too little, and he came into conflict with his own party, indeed even the members of his own cabinet, Szapáry resigned in the autumn of 1892.

Francis Joseph was now faced with a dilemma concerning political trends in Hungary; he had to decide whether to adhere to the dynasty's traditional Catholic devotion or to the dynasty's equally traditional right of the absolute war lord. Despite his profound religiosity the sovereign chose the latter course and agreed to the reform of church policy. In November 1892, therefore, he entrusted Sándor Wekerle, a staunch adherent of the reform, with the formation of a government.

In the period under review, Wekerle was the first and only prime minister of bourgeois origin. He was the acknowledged financial genius of his age, a highly qualified expert, with a smooth face and a steady smile, a politician of European standing—and a diplomat. His exceptional career, however, was not achieved by fighting the leading élite but by being accepted into it. He married into the nobility, and he himself became a landowner; he differed from the politicians of the noble élite only in his origins, not in his later career. The Wekerle government rejected half measures and soon submitted bills for compulsory civil marriage, the state registration of births, marriages and deaths, the recognition of the Jewish religion on a basis of equality with other received churches, and freedom of worship for all denominations.

The reform measures aroused controversies lasting for years. Political opinion divided into two camps. The Catholic clergy, together with the militant faithful and the conservative aristocracy, led an increasingly bitter resistance, then launched counter-agitation against the Church's 'persecutors' for defiling the sacrament of marriage and forcing people to commit 'deadly sins'. In a special encyclical Pope Leo XIII called upon the clergy and believers to 'revive the spirit of Catholicism'. The great part of the clergy exerted all its spiritual influence to incite simple people to demonstrations and disturbances.

In January 1894, a Catholic conference was held for middle-class believers, where the banner of political Catholicism was unfurled. A year later, under Count Nándor Zichy and Miklós Móric Esterházy, an anti-reform and anti-liberal party was founded: the Catholic People's Party.

The anti-reform activity found supporters in the parliamentary parties as well. Most of the National Party along with Apponyi, a faction of the Independence Party under Gábor Ugron and a right-wing group of the government party with the ex-prime minister Szapáry at the head, all came out against consistent reform. The government, on the other hand, could also rely on considerable forces: it could appeal to the Protestants, the Jewish bourgeoisie, those supporters of the national state free of religious bigotry, and liberal-minded people in general. The cause of the reform was furthered considerably by Kossuth's principled advice; his supporters should not ponder over the dubious circumstances which brought about the reform, but should bear in mind the essential fact that reform was long overdue. The majority of the Independence Party in fact supported the reform.

After spectacular demonstrations and debates lasting for months, the large majority of the lower house of parliament passed the bill on compulsory civil marriage in April 1894. During the parliamentary battle a sad event occurred which, for a brief passage of time, laid bare the approaching crisis of the Dual Monarchy and the deep contradictions of the system. On 20 March 1894, after 45 years of exile, Lajos Kossuth died in Turin. The news silenced the loyalist courtiers and plunged the whole country into deep mourning. The indifference displayed by official circles led to daily demonstrations; the funeral on 2 April was also an imposing national demonstration. Two weeks later at Hódmezővásárhely, in the Great Plain, an agrarian socialist 'insurrection' broke out. On 22 April, the police raided the premises of the workers' association, and the following day they arrested the popular leader, János Szántó Kovács. The people then attacked the town hall and engaged both the police and a hastily dispatched hussar regiment. Several workers fell victim in the uneven fight, and many socialists were imprisoned. The uproar in the district was cooled on this occasion only by the proclamation of a state of emergency.

It was also in May that the notorious Memorandum Trial was held at Kolozsvár, a typical product of the period's nationality policy. After constant persecutions, the Rumanian National Committee listed its grievances in a memorandum in 1892 and sent it to the monarch. After its rejection, the memorandum was published in several lan-

guages and circulated abroad. As a result the government put the leaders on trial. The trial took place in the midst of nationalist demonstrations and agitation organized by both sides. The authors of the memorandum were sentenced to several years' imprisonment, the Rumanian National Party was banned and the National Committee dissolved in 1895. The government's actions only heightened national differences and compromised the oppressive Hungarian system in the eyes of foreign public opinion.

While the government was suppressing the unexpectedly explosive antagonisms by force or with great difficulty was smoothing them over, the aristocratic opposition in the upper house threw out the civil marriage bill and discredited the government with its intrigues in court circles. At the end of May, Francis Joseph relieved Wekerle of his office and prepared a shift towards the right in the government. An unprecedented revolt by the Liberal Party, however, obliged him to abandon his scheme and to reappoint the Wekerle government. After this intermezzo, both houses of parliament accepted the main proposals of the bill without further difficulties. The king showed his displeasure by delaying his signature, and the power of the government slowly dwindled because of the lack of royal favour. Compulsory civil marriage and state registration of births, marriages and deaths were duly sanctioned, but the ratification of other proposals was delayed until 1895. At Christmas 1894, the king dismissed the, for him, overly liberal cabinet without much ado.

The mother died, but the child survived. The Church-State reform was a progressive achievement. It brought about the partial separation of State and Church. It liberalized the marriage law, it guaranteed freedom of worship, and it reduced the influence of the churches in the life of society. The government, so far as its tactical aim was to break up the division over constitutional conflicts, achieved only temporary results. During the long struggle, the nationalist opposition had cracked, but it did not fall to pieces. It did not give up its guiding principle, and it maintained its popularity. As far as the nationalities were concerned, they saw the reforms, not as liberal progress, but as new injuries to their national churches. Hungarian nationalism, instead of withering away, lost no ground in spite of liberal and conservative political tactics.

### The Bánffy Era

The Hungarian liberal movement exhausted its strength in the Church-State controversy. Francis Joseph and the leading circles demanded new policies. The former wanted to strengthen the Monarchy, the latter wished to strengthen Hungarian supremacy. Francis Joseph sought not able statesmen but energetic administrators to head the governments. In Hungary he found what he was looking for in the person of Baron Dezső Bánffy. Bánffy was a Transylvanian aristocrat from an old but not rich family, a so-called 'semi-magnate'. He had spent most of his career in counties where the nationalities predominated. He had held high posts, and he was notorious for his extreme chauvinism and brutality. He remained the same provincially crafty, ruthless lord lieutenant even after he became prime minister.

In the course of settling the still incomplete Church-State matters he came into conflict, first with the Papal Nuncio Angliardi, who had tried improperly to meddle in internal affairs, and then with the joint foreign minister, Gusztáv Kálnoky. It signified the success of the Hungarian prime minister that Kálnoky had to resign as the result of his intervention. After these short-lived episodes, Bánffy could devote his energies to his chosen task of 'bringing to heel' the nationalities and the socialist movement. In the prime minister's office a special section was established for the central supervision of methodical suppression. The government banned socialist meetings, and 'dangerous' agitators were placed under police observation. Heavy prison terms were meted out to Szántó Kovács and the Hódmezővásárhely 'rebels'; and the leadership of the Social Democratic Party was tried on account of its protests against the unjust sentences. The party newspaper, *Népszava* (The Voice of the People), was harassed by libel suits and confiscations. In 1895, the celebration of May Day was prohibited.

Similar measures were used to cripple the political activities and cultural organizations of the nationalities, too. In a protest their representatives, at a congress held in August 1895, set up a joint committee and agreed on a common programme; they demanded national autonomy inside Hungary. Bánffy rejected the reasonable demands, which he branded as 'federalist tendencies', and action was started against the members of the nationalities' executive committee. He also promoted so-called cultural societies aiming at Magyarization and supported Magyarization by every means. It was in this period that the 'craze of chauvinism' prevailed in public life, a terror which weighed not only on the nationalities but also on the advocates of



soher reality and reconciliation, on all the adherents of progressive ideas.

The thousand-year anniversary of the Magyars' settlement in what is now Hungary was also marked in the spirit of nationalism in 1896, as Millennium Celebration. New buildings were erected, memorials and monuments raised, and a millennial international exhibition opened. A 'Truce of God' (*Treuga Dei*) was declared, and a ceremonial session was held in parliament. A solemn mass and a military procession were organized on the anniversary of the coronation; the king and queen, with the court and the diplomatic corps in attendance, were present in full splendour. The Millennium recalled the greatness of the past, reflected that of the present and suggested that of the future. The politicians of the nationalities, however, in spite of reprisals, protested against the nationalist content of the Millennium. With the decline of the millennial boom, there were large-scale strikes in the building industry, in the brick factories of Budapest (July–August 1897), violent clashes in the mines of Resica-Anina (January 1897), and smaller wage conflicts throughout the country.

Dissatisfaction among the village poor also found new outlets. In the summer of 1897, large-scale harvest strikes broke out in 14 counties. Organization went on both in secret and in legal form. The movement found an enthusiastic supporter within the leadership of the SDP in the person of István Várkonyi, who had himself been an agrarian labourer. Várkonyi started, in the summer of 1896, mainly from his own resources, the newspaper *Földmivelő* (The Agricultural Labourer) and worked to convene an agrarian congress. On this point, however, he came into conflict with the other members of the party leadership. The faction led by Silberberg had already been pushed aside at the end of 1895 by the moderate elements, who dared not risk their legal status by class struggle in the villages or by the launching of revolutionary activities. This leadership rejected Várkonyi's radicalism, and dissociated itself both from him and from his paper.

Várkonyi then founded a new party, the Independent Socialist Party. The programme of the opening congress, held at Cegléd in September 1897, called not only for measures to improve the lot of the agricultural labourer but also for the nationalization of church lands and of all estates over 60 hectares in size, these to be then rented out in plots of 3 hectares. For the first time in Hungarian history—though in veiled terms—a peasant movement formulated a democratic programme for the distribution of the land, in keeping with the radical claims of the poor peasantry.

Várkonyi's movement spread rapidly, capturing hitherto immobile

regions, including even the Nyírség in the north-east, where it culminated at the end of 1897 and early in 1898 in a movement for the partitioning of land. The village poor attacked the local officials, and, after driving away the gendarmerie, voted resolutions for partitioning. In a few places they even began to peg out the boundaries of the plots. The government applied the old formula: it beat down the 'insurrections' with large armed forces, hanged the *Földmivelő*, imprisoned Várkonyi, and placed the organizers under police supervision. Terror was employed in the towns as well. About one-third of the unions were suspended, several hundred houses were searched, no permits were granted for meetings and even the regular congress of the SDP was banned. The Social Democrats alone recorded 51 workers murdered, 114 wounded and hundreds deported. By the end of 1898 the land-partitioning movements in the Nyírség and elsewhere had been suppressed by these measures.

The government tried to ease the tension by resettlement, the parcelling-out of estates sold at auction and the giving of some sort of material help. An example of this policy of mixed terror and social welfare was Act II of 1898, called the 'Slave Act'. Every worker was compelled to enter into a written contract with his employer which was, in theory, equally binding on both parties. The same act, however, assured the landowner the use of the gendarmerie to bind shirking or runaway workers. It also prescribed heavy penalties for those agrarian labourers who engaged in strikes or in organizing.

The harsh measures did not break the spirit of the proletariat of town and country. The 'Bánffy era' was the heroic age of the Hungarian workers' movement. The SDP also stood up to the persecution; its organizations survived and continued to work for the improvement of the workers' conditions and for democratic rights. It gradually withdrew, however, from revolutionary action and from encouraging the poor peasantry to further their struggle for the partitioning of the land.

### The First Signs of a Crisis

In the 1890s, clashes between the ruling classes of the Monarchy and the middle classes were also frequent. Landowners relegated to the background by free competition and the gentry who were obliged to earn their living watched with jealous resentment the way in which the capitalist bourgeoisie was gaining ground in the social, political and cultural spheres. The conservative landowners and the intellectuals of the gentry middle class found support for their attacks among



certain foreign ideologists, such as Rudolf Meyer and Karl Vogelsang, and other German and Austrian anti-semitic writers. The Landowners' Federation under Count Sándor Károlyi, and the credit and consumers' co-operatives under its auspices, offered some sort of organization and money to the new agrarian movement which emerged in the nineties.

The agrarian programme of this new movement aimed in general at radical changes in liberal economic policy; in its details it proposed restraints on commodity speculation, an end to corn-import preferences for the big mills, the assurance of cheap credit facilities, subsidies for debt-ridden landowners, and, most of all, higher protective farm tariffs. The leaders wanted to carry out their policy of 'conservative reform' not only in the economic, but also the social and even cultural spheres. With their sharply anti-capitalist (barely veiled anti-semitic) and anti-socialist propaganda they won over a considerable portion of the landowners and tried to extend their influence over the entire 'farmer society', that is, over the landed peasantry, too. On the opposite side was the bloc of landowner-politicians and capitalists who adhered to economic liberalism; these were the so-called mercantilists. They pointed to and attacked the 'socio-political and economic reaction' lurking behind agrarianism, and they emphasized the importance of industrial development. In the governing circles of the Liberal Party the mercantilist line prevailed.

Struggles over internal policy emerged already in the festive year of the Millennium, during the elections of 1896. At this time the Catholic People's Party launched its agrarian-clericalist campaign, with strong support from the clergy. At this time also a new leader of the Independents made his appearance, who brought with him the spell of a great name, but without inheriting any spark of his father's spirit and character; Ferenc Kossuth returned home from Italy. Against a strengthened opposition Bánffy still tried to use 'the strong hand', but this time with dubious success. He was faced with a reduced but furious opposition which was prepared to fight back under the slogan 'force for force'. Its aim was to overthrow Bánffy and, through him, the mercantilist line. The difficulties over renewal of the decennial economic compromise seemed to furnish a splendid opportunity for this.

In the preliminary discussions for the renewal of the economic compromise the Hungarian government succeeded in obtaining certain concessions. The constitutional ratification of the agreement was rendered impossible, however, by anarchic political conditions in Austria. Three decades of economic development had upset the pre-

vious balance in the other part of the empire as well as in Hungary. On the one hand, there had emerged within the Austrian society, in opposition to the prevailing upper-bourgeois liberal trend, a strong, German nationalist, christian-social, petty-bourgeois opposition and, furthermore, a rapidly spreading socialist movement. On the other hand, Austro-German supremacy was seriously threatened by the ever stronger attacks of the other emerging bourgeois nations and by constant national conflicts. The fall in 1893 of the ever-shifting Taaffe government in Austria, which had leaned on conservative groups, marked the end of an era of political peace, as had the resignation of Kálmán Tisza in Hungary. The Badeni government, which was responsible for the economic compromise, issued a language decree favourable to the Czechs. Owing to the stormy opposition of the Austro-Germans, the Badeni government fell; and the succeeding Gautsch government withdrew the decree and then fell because of the subsequent obstruction of the Czechs. During the last few years of the century, six governments followed in quick succession, but owing to the Austrian-Czech differences, none could end the anarchic situation in parliament.

The impossibility of parliamentary ratification of the new compromise provided a legal basis for the realization of Hungary's economic independence. The Independents, profiting from this vulnerable point in the system of dualism, appealed to the provisions of the 1867 Compromise and opened fire on the Bánffy government. In the summer of 1898 the two governments, with the consent of the emperor, agreed—as so often before in the history of the Monarchy—to bridge the difficulties with a provisional arrangement, prolonging the old compromise till the end of 1903. A celebrated clause added that if a new agreement was not ratified by then, the old would remain in force until repudiation by either party. This actually illegal clause was called by the public 'the Ischl proviso'.

This clause, damaging to constitutional national rights, raised storms of protest. There were scandalous scenes in the Hungarian parliament rivalling the obstruction of the *Reichsrat*, and public opinion tended to support this obstruction to the compromise as a heroic resistance to oppression. Bánffy was in a difficult position, and was unable even to get a majority for the annual budget. It little availed him that the government party, at a session behind closed doors, gave him authorization for the budget, proving thereby that legal procedures were impossible because of the obstruction of a minority in parliament. The opposition now charged the government with 'authoritarian party rule' and demanded Bánffy's head at all costs. The aristocratic section

of the government party, led by Gyula Andrássy, jr., 'defected' from the party. It became clear that the only solution was the dismissal of Bánffy. This followed in February 1899.

Bánffy, with his 'mailed fist' policy, instead of restoring order, had deepened a crisis in which there now became evident, not the unsuitability of certain individuals or methods, but the imminent crisis of the entire dualist system.

#### National Opposition and the Strengthening of the Mass Movements. The Széll Government

There appeared no other person more able to solve the intricate situation than Kálmán Széll. He was the son-in-law of Ferenc Deák, son of an ancient landowning family and also president of a bank, a member of the government party but also on good terms with the opposition. The new prime minister devised a new formula: Hungary 'having the legal status of an independent customs area', would voluntarily prolong the economic union until the end of 1903. As if touched by a magic wand, under the influence of this legal formula the violent opposition was quickly appeased. Those who had left the party returned. Apponyi and his party, though with some reservations in principle, but with obliging readiness, fused with the government party, and the Independents fell silent. Behind the formula proclaimed as the motive for the pact and advertised as a national achievement there lurked in actuality the sloganeering pseudo-oppositionalism of upper-class politics, which was so easy to appease with offers of major positions and special favours for the agrarians. Thus, on this occasion too, the crisis was solved, or rather put off, not by the victory of one side over the other, nor by the fall of a government, but with a contract and merger, with a compromise within the system of one-party rule.

The Széll government issued as its programme the slogan of 'right, law and justice'. Sailing cleverly between the major rival factions of the swollen government party, it managed to bring calm, for a few years at least, in the sphere of high politics. Under its cloak the agrarians made great strides forward. They exerted a potent influence on intellectual and economic life. The compromise agreement concluded at the end of 1902 between the Széll government and the Austrian Körber government contained a considerable rise in farm tariffs, while at the same time raising Hungary's quota of joint expenses by 3 per cent. But this agreement, too, failed to become law. The prevailing

political calm in Hungary at the turn of the century was then shattered by the sudden storm over the military question.

In January 1903, the House began the discussion of the bill concerning the enlargement of the army, long urged by military circles. The government proposed a 25 per cent increase in the imperial army and in the Hungarian army, and a proportionate rise in military expenditure. The Hungarian leading circles agreed in principle with the strategic reasons for armament, yet the opposition insisted upon an extraordinarily popular compensation for the 'sacrifices' so unpopular both among the upper classes and with the people; it demanded the introduction of Hungarian as a language of command and Hungarian insignia, and the reduction of the years of service. The anti-democratic and anti-national tyranny of 'k.u.k.' militarism was indeed a sore grievance and to stop it was indeed a legitimate national demand. The landowner-gentry ruling stratum cleverly combined the national interest with its own advantages—with the acquisition of new positions of power and new opportunities for sinecure placements, and with the hope that Magyarization could be realized through the army.

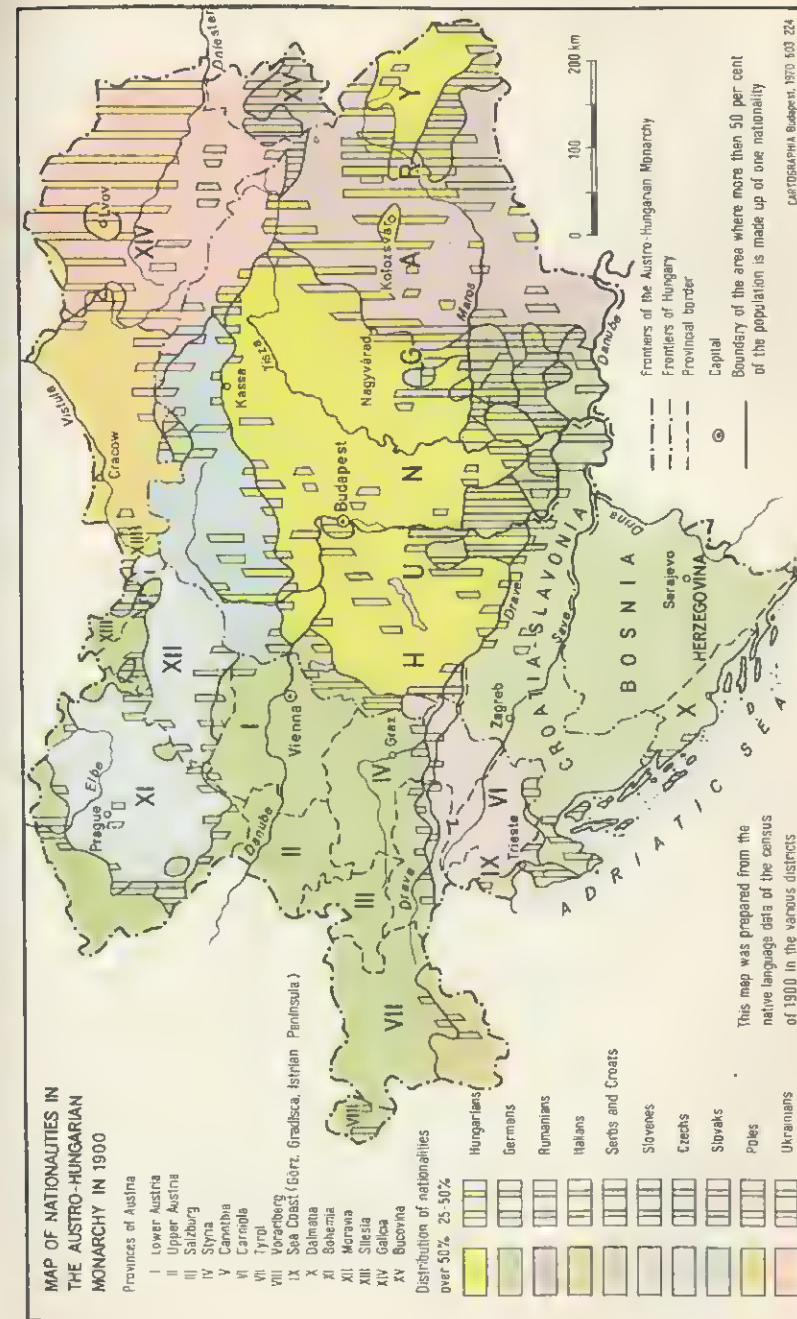
Parliamentary obstruction based on this firm tactical position emerged in the spring of 1903. Széll did not dare to use force against this obstruction over the national military question. He waited patiently, hoping that it would exhaust itself. But when the opposition showed no signs of giving up, it was the patience of Vienna and the government party which became exhausted. In June 1903, Széll, 'the peace-maker', lost favour and had to resign his post, leaving a new crisis behind him.

The economic crisis in the early years of the century contributed to a fresh outburst of political struggle. The crisis mainly afflicted mining, heavy industry and the building industry, but its effects could be felt in other branches of the economy, in a decline in industrial investment and the rate of new undertakings and in a sudden rise in unemployment. The crisis heightened the differences between agrarians and mercantilists, and it turned the petty and middle bourgeoisie, desiring economic independence, against Austro-Hungarian finance capital. It roused the working class to a new state of militancy. As early as 1901, there were demonstrations of the unemployed. In the following years more and more wage struggles occurred throughout the country. Navvies and unorganized workers in many places joined the strikes, too. In 1903, strikes affected whole towns and brought work to a standstill in whole sections of the economy. After the first Trade Union Congress of 1899, nation-wide trade unions were organized, at the head of which stood the Trades Council. By 1904, the number of the organized workers had risen fivefold, reaching over 50,000.

The Social Democratic Party and the trade unions based their organization on a wide network of stewards in the factories, working-class and industrial districts. Their actual influence extended to a much larger number of people than the organized; during certain upswings it extended over several hundred thousand people.

The socialist organizations, however, did not reach the villages, and they also neglected the oppressed workers of the nationalities. It is true that the Social Democratic Party had insufficient funds at its disposal and had great difficulty in keeping the party papers going. It could not hope to establish new ones, and the number of organizers was also low. The doctrinaire principles adopted on the agrarian question, however, necessarily narrowed the party's mass basis. After the crushing of Várkonyi's movement, a new opposition emerged in the party, with the express aim of supporting the agrarian movement 'by all means and measures'. This opposition, under the leadership of Vilmos Mezőfi, a journalist, broke away in 1900 and established the Reorganized Social Democratic Party. The new party recruited its members mainly in the Great Plain, the home of the revolutionary poor peasantry. Within a short time, Mezőfi and his associates adopted nationalist principles and drifted towards the landowner-bourgeois parties, thus missing the chance of building up a movement of the democratic poor peasantry.

The SDP was strictly internationalist, as was clearly shown in the party programme of 1903. The programme, drafted with the help of Karl Kautsky, was good in comparison with others in the Second International, and it was more exact in principle than the former one. It stated that the final aims of the socialists could not be achieved without a 'systematic and energetic class struggle', and without the 'taking over of political power'. The exact methods and means, however, were rather vaguely stated as organization and the spreading of ideas. The range of immediate tasks was broader, and the listing of them became more definite, but the essence had not changed. In the agrarian question the programme did not go beyond the abolition of entail and measures for the betterment of working conditions; in the national question it did not go beyond vague demands for 'autonomy' and 'equality'. It did not make clear to its followers the stand that should be taken on the main questions of the momentous years to come. The party considered universal suffrage to be the issue of prime importance, and it looked for allies for its campaign to achieve this.



### The Fall of the Liberal Party

Count Károly Khuen-Héderváry, the former *bán* of Croatia, assumed the premiership after the dismissal of Széll. During the few months of his 'guest performance' no advance was made in the bogged-down military question. Francis Joseph, weary of the procrastination, decided, on the advice of his intimate military and political councillors, to take energetic measures to cut short the hydra-headed debate. On 17 September 1903, he issued general orders to his army at headquarters in Chłopy, Galicia, to the effect that he would not allow his rights as supreme war lord or the unity of the army to be impaired in any way. The army would remain as hitherto: one united force, which would respect the peculiarities of every 'race'. The orders, instead of soothing, merely roused ruffled feelings once more. Khuen-Héderváry was swept away by the indignation, and the emperor was forced to put on the appearance of moderation and conciliation, although in reality he prepared for sterner measures. In October 1903, the staunch adherent of dualism, the leading spokesman of order, István Tisza, was asked to form a cabinet.

Count István Tisza was the most important and most characteristic politician of imperialist Hungary. He guarded and cultivated his paternal heritage, the wielding of power and a twenty-thousand-hold estate, with cold, reserved obstinacy, and in the Calvinist conviction of being one of the elect. As early as the age of 25 he was a member of parliament, then later a bank president. At the turn of the century he became one of the poles of political life. Tisza recognized clearly that the ruling classes in Hungary, in order to retain their power and their territorial possessions intact, more than ever needed the support of the Monarchy and the alliance with Germany. This conception of *Realpolitik*, however, posited the unaltered preservation of existing conditions, which could not be done without the use of force. Tisza did not shrink from this task, even if opposed by his own class. He never aimed at popularity or applause; he strove, with a single-mindedness unusual in upper-class politics, to realize his ideas.

He viewed his immediate task as the breaking of the parliamentary filibuster, the obstruction. He put on the agenda a motion calling for a more rigorous interpretation of the standing orders of the House, which caused tremendous consternation. Open warfare had very nearly broken out when the Independence Party opposition unexpectedly offered to make peace. In return for the dropping of the proposed revision of the standing orders, the opposition was willing to allow the budget and the regular annual conscription bill to be voted. Thus, at



the most critical moment (surely precisely because of this) a showdown was avoided.

The workers and the poor peasantry, on the other hand, were extremely restless early in 1904. In addition to several hundred minor industrial strikes the movement spread among the miners, the poor peasantry of the Stormy Corner, the Bánát and the Voivodina, and even among the railway workers, whose conditions verged on slavery. After many futile remonstrances a strike broke out in the shunting yard of Budapest on 19 April. The movement spread like lightning, and within a week this first great strike of the railwaymen paralysed transport throughout the country. Tisza used an iron hand to break the strike. He sent in troops and called up many of the strikers for military service. After the strike many arrests were made in retaliation for 'the unprecedented breach of discipline'. The railwaymen's strike had carried news of rising discontent even to the peasants. In the chronicle of actions of 1904 the most outstanding was the demonstration of the peasants of Élesd, who had been forbidden to make speeches or assemble. Their protest was made memorable by the slaughter carried out by the gendarmes who had been kept there on alert; it left 33 dead and more than a hundred wounded.

Tisza had seemingly restored order, but no problem had been solved. After a short truce, with the unswerving doggedness characteristic of him, he prepared for a new assault. During the autumn session of the House he once more threw down the gauntlet, attempting revision of the standing orders. The opposition replied immediately with a charge of violating the truce and with a fierce obstruction. On 18 November, Tisza carried out a well-planned parliamentary coup; on a signal from the Speaker of the House the debate was interrupted and the proposal was voted. This was an unconstitutional step. As Tisza himself said, it was only by disregarding the standing orders once that they, and Hungarian parliamentary life, could be saved.

The Gordian solution was unacceptable to the ruling political circles. The aristocratic faction led by Andrassy left the government party, and Apponyi's group joined the Independence Party. Tisza had accomplished in a day what the leaders of the opposition had failed to achieve for years: the forging of an opposition coalition. On 19 November, the leaders of all the different opposition factions united in a new political organization, the Coalition. As a tactical move Ferenc Kossuth was elected chairman of the steering committee, although Apponyi and Andrassy were regarded as the actual leaders.

Just as it had been impossible to trifle with Tisza, so it was with the strengthened and obdurate Coalition. This was confirmed, on 13 De-

cember, by the systematic demolition of the House chamber and by the subsequent nation-wide agitation, which had loud echoes in every forum of Hungarian politics. The only course open to Tisza was the dissolution of parliament. He confidently declared that the decision was now in the hands of the nation.

The elections, conducted in an overheated atmosphere charged with sensational issues at home and abroad, brought in an unfavourable verdict on the policies of 1867. Every conservative, nationalist and democratic oppositional force united on one negative stand: the rejection of Tisza's rule by force. Even the disenfranchised masses took part in the campaign, influencing the voters by demonstrating against government party candidates. In the final result 159 government party candidates were returned and 166 Independence Party candidates, the whole opposition gaining 254 seats.

The defeat of the Liberal Party, which had governed the country for thirty years, was a severe blow to the whole system. It showed that the measures of government applied so far could not be sustained any more.

#### The Political Crisis of 1905-6

The elections were in progress when news came of the outbreak of the Russian Revolution. There was a tremendous reaction to the great event throughout the agitated country. The proletariat of Russia was struggling 'for the oppressed throughout the world', wrote *Népszava*; 'their fate is our fate, their victory begins the defeat of all tyrants, the end of slavery'. The workers were joined in their demonstrations of sympathy by the best of the intelligentsia, protesting against Gorky's imprisonment and against 'the bestiality of czarism'. The working people watched the events in Russia, which spoke to their own condition, with keen interest. They were filled with admiration for the battleship *Potemkin*, 'the battleship of the revolution', and for the bloody mass strikes and uprisings.

The victorious Coalition tried to blackmail Vienna with the revolutionary events. Referring to the mortal crisis of czarism, they advised the monarch to be more lenient and give in to the demands of the nation. Francis Joseph, however, refused to allow any reforms of 'his army', the only sound wheel of the disintegrating empire. The only member of the coalition whom he was willing to accept as head of a government was Andrassy, and even him only if he completely

excluded the military programme from discussion. But it was precisely the military programme which held together the Coalition, and without it neither Andrassy nor anybody else could undertake to form a government.

The slackening of the apparatus of oppression gave the working classes an opportunity to express their discontent more freely. In the spring of 1905, nearly every industrial region of the country and every trade was affected by strikes. Contemporaries saw a veritable earthquake in these actions, in which wage demands were quite frequently coloured by political objectives as well. The greatest working-class struggle of the period, the six weeks' general strike of the iron workers in the capital, started as a solidarity movement. From the end of May to the beginning of July, work stopped in every iron and machine plant in Budapest. Nearly 30,000 well-disciplined and organized iron-workers demonstrated by their actions for the improvement of working conditions and the recognition of their organizations. This imposing strike finally ended when a number of small concessions were gained and did not develop into a nation-wide struggle, although in other towns, particularly in the mines of the Pécs region, there were also strikes of a revolutionary character. At the same time, in the fields of Transdanubia, the scythes were turned against the landowners and the gendarmerie, and harvesting came to a halt.

On many estates, at the end of May, the so far patient labourers and harvesting workmen went on strike. Five thousand soldiers and gendarmes and six thousand 'reserve workers' were sent against 25,000 labourers demanding better wages, better treatment and working conditions. More than 5,000 strikers were arrested. The prisons being full, they were locked up in stables and pigsties. But their spirit was not to be broken. 'There is no law', 'the king also broke it', 'our masters are also striking', they replied to the magistrate, while singing the *Marseillaise*. 'Our wage claims will be decided by a life and death struggle', they told the gendarmes. In some places they succeeded in forcing the landowners to make concessions.

The political crisis placed the ruling classes in an agonizing situation. The defeated Tisza government kept urging that it be replaced by a strong and energetic government. The deepening crisis induced the king to break the Coalition's resistance by means little bound by parliamentary forms. His confidential agent, Baron Géza Fejérváry, a general, for twenty years minister of war, the commandant of a guards regiment, was picked for the task and appointed to form a caretaker government. After prolonged attempts, Fejérváry was able to recruit, even from the ranks of the second best, only half a cabinet.

The government appointed on 18 June, nicknamed 'the guardsmen', was received with general suspicion. The coalition majority voted it down and solemnly proclaimed the 'national resistance' hallowed by feudal tradition. It called upon the municipalities to refuse tax collections and conscripts to the 'unconstitutional' government. The months-long political crisis developed into a crisis of government in general after the appointment of Fejérváry.

In this embittered strife of the ruling classes in Hungary (and in the Monarchy) the balance of power developed in a peculiar way. The Fejérváry government, owing to the neutrality of Tisza and the liberals, the attack of the socialists, and a vote of non-confidence in the upper house, was completely isolated; it could rely nevertheless on the emperor, the army and the loyal segments of the state apparatus. The Coalition contained classes and sections with contrary interests, and, owing to its magnate leadership and inner contradictions, was unable to take radical action against Fejérváry. But the passive resistance of the Coalition's broad masses also rendered impossible any kind of constitutional government. In its desperate situation the government sought for allies and for a popular programme. The minister of interior, József Kristóffy, thought to find the new conception and tactics in the suffrage and in winning over the socialist workers.

At the end of July 1905, agreement was reached between Kristóffy and the leadership of the SDP, according to which the latter promised the support of the organized working class for the government, provided that police supervision be relaxed, organization among the farm labourers permitted and reform of the franchise officially submitted. This seemingly unexpected turn of events followed logically from the situation in Hungary and from the policy of the SDP. At the party congress of 1905, a rising opposition had criticized the leadership for its anti-democratic tendencies, for its neglect of the agrarian movement and the nationalities, and for unnecessary caution. Under the impact of the mass movement the party leadership itself decided upon more energetic measures. The leadership of the SDP, ready to compromise with the enemy, prepared to support whoever promised universal suffrage.

From August 1905 onwards, the SDP organized a wide campaign to win the suffrage, mobilizing hundreds of thousands of the working class both in the capital and in the country. The radical intelligentsia joined forces with them. Famous writers, scientists, and the members of the newly founded Suffrage League, were just as indignant about the reactionary chauvinism of the Coalition and their false tricks as the socialists themselves. The suffrage campaign culminated in the im-



posing demonstration of 15 September. One hundred thousand demonstrators surrounded parliament, where, for the first time since the call for resistance, the House was sitting. People both in the capital and the country expected that great changes would result from that day. But just as the assembly of gentleman-rebels did not charge into a 'Convention', so also the sans-culottes of Pest did not fire on the House. Nothing happened on 'Red Friday'. The demonstrators dispersed peacefully, and at most the government had won assurance of broader support.

One week later, the leaders of the Coalition received an invitation from the king. In a brief five-minute audience Francis Joseph informed them of his condition, demanding complete abandonment of their programme. The Coalition could not believe yet that the game was lost. Even if it was forced off the streets of Pest and it had lost ground in the country, yet in the counties, among the middle classes and the Hungarian peasantry, it still had massive reserves of support. For this reason the steering committee, which had till now only proclaimed 'national resistance', tried to realize it in the autumn. It proceeded very cautiously indeed, working within the framework of the constitution. A long line of counties refused to comply with the decrees of the 'absolutist' government; they also refused to collect taxes and to gather conscripts. When Kristóffy then suspended the staff of the resisting county administrations, these replied by boycotting the inauguration of new lord lieutenants and by obstructing their operations. In about half of the counties resistance was fairly unanimous, in the other half, it was carried on half-heartedly or not at all. The majority of the non-Hungarians watched events passively; if only because of their dislike of Hungarian nationalism, they did not join the resistance. But they did not support the government either, although the reform of the suffrage met with the approval of most non-Hungarian politicians. Only the Croat-Serb Coalition declared its readiness, in the famous 'Fiume Resolution' (3 October 1905), to support the Hungarian Coalition and independence, in exchange for the recognition of the national rights of Croatia and Dalmatia.

In the beginning, the Austrian government was sharply opposed to the reform of the suffrage in Hungary. The prime minister, Gautschi, argued that should this be realized it would be impossible to hinder the introduction of a similar reform in Austria as well, which he thought would be a serious threat to the empire. However, influential Austrian bourgeois parties, interested precisely in the reorganization of the empire, and the democratic parties, hoping for social and national progress, took up the struggle in the summer of 1905 for the

introduction of universal suffrage. And when the workers of Vienna, hearing the news of constitutional reform in Russia in October 1905, organized stormy demonstrations in support of this demand, the monarch and the Austrian government no longer opposed reforming the suffrage.

Thus, even in this critical period, events in Austria and Hungary were very closely related to one another. The favourable turn in the struggle for universal suffrage both in Russia and Austria gave a new impetus to the movement in Hungary, which the Coalition endeavoured to counter with the intensifying of 'national resistance'.

At the end of 1905, national passions, as is common with mass movements, transgressed the instructions of the cautious organizers. In a number of places there were riots, bloody clashes with the military, and proclamations of martial law. These popular 'excesses', plus the fight of the organized working class, and the successes of the Agricultural Labourers' Federation, founded early in 1906, forced the Coalition to make a gradual retreat. When the government stopped its payments to the defiant counties and the salaries of the suspended staff, the backbone of the resistance collapsed. And when, in February 1906, parliament was dissolved by an officer, and then, in March, the steering committee of the Coalition was banned, both the eagerness and the courage of the resistance waned entirely. The Coalition, much weakened, and citing 'higher patriotic considerations', showed readiness to surrender. This was soon accomplished through the mediation of Ferenc Kossuth and Fejérváry. Vienna remunerated the 'higher patriotic considerations' by offering ministerial posts to the leaders of the Coalition after they, in the so-called 'April Pact', had not only given up their military programme but had also committed themselves to electoral reform.

After the surrender there was nothing to prevent the king from appointing the new government from among the aristocrats of the rebellious national resistance and the bearer of the formidable name of Kossuth. The prime ministry, however, was reserved for Wekerle, who was an adherent of 1867. Thus, on 7 April 1906, the year-long government crisis came to an end.

The political crisis which had been smouldering for a decade and had burst into flame in 1905, ended with a reactionary compromise between the two camps of the ruling classes. The prevailing forces at home and abroad made an essentially different solution impossible. This outcome was to be expected first of all from the character of the national opposition, the leadership of the landowning classes and their conservative, nationalist programme. In the last analysis, it lay

in the whole structure of Hungarian society. In the light of events, the tactics of the SDP also proved wrong. It had lent the strength of the masses to the weapons of authority and had extricated the system of 1867 from its desperate situation. Thus, it contributed to the reactionary solution of the crisis without winning any democratic reform. Despite the negative features of the crisis of 1905, its objective results contributed to the clarification of the tangled class fronts and cleared the arena for the struggle between the reactionary forces of dualism and the democratic movement.

### **The Activities of the Coalition Government**

The new government differed from its predecessors in that the agrarians now played the leading role and that the adherents of 1848 and 1867 became now formally reconciled on the platform of Hungarian imperialism, which hoped to play a leading role in the Monarchy. The leaders of the Coalition took up their posts while spreading illusions of national and democratic reforms, but they kept silent about the pact they had made with the king. At the new elections they had practically no opponents. The Liberal Party had dissolved itself. The non-Hungarian candidates were ruthlessly hindered in their campaign and were unable to return more than 25 members. The peasant socialists gained only two seats.

By way of introduction the government declared war on the 'traitors': the office-holders of the 'guardsman' regime, and the socialists. An investigation of the Agricultural Labourers' Federation was launched; many of its branches and a number of trade unions were suspended. In spite of constant harassment the working class defended its organizations and kept the strike movement alive. Likewise, the poor peasantry was undeterred by the gendarmes or by the crowded prisons. In 1906, wider and better organized harvest strikes than those of the previous year took place, with considerable successes, in 24 counties. Towards the end of the year, however, partly owing to an economic boom, the mass movements slowed down.

The government helped to consolidate its position by introducing a few welfare measures. Health insurance was extended and centralized in a national organization under state regulation. Compulsory accident insurance was introduced for all industrial workers. The Railway Servants Act, side by side with a slight wage rise, forbade the employees of the state railways (MÁV) to strike or to join socialist organizations, and it also made the knowledge of Hungarian compul-

sory. A new act on agricultural labour, the 'Whipping Post Act', was conceived in the agrarianist spirit on the model of its twin, the 'Slave Labour Act' of 1898. On the one hand, it abolished the remnants of feudal labour services and flagrant abuses in the payment of wages in kind and forbade corporal punishment of labourers above the age of 18; on the other hand, it guaranteed the landowner the use of the military against disobedient labourers and prescribed very severe sanctions against labourers on strike. The Industrial Development Act of 1907, in order to win over the bourgeoisie, authorized the government to subsidize weak branches of industry and newly established firms. Of the projected 100 million crowns, only 40 millions were paid out in subsidies before the outbreak of the war. Nevertheless it brought much profit to manufacturing industry, especially to the textile branches, and to factory owners, distributors and influence peddlers.

After soporific slogans and measures designed to satiate the nationalist segment of public opinion, the Coalition government, in the autumn of 1907, came up against the stumbling-block of its own duplicity; the decennial economic compromise was due for renewal. Since it did not have the courage to confess that it was already bound by its pact with Vienna to agree to this, the government created the illusion of achievements. It was no matter if they were mere formalities, as long as they wore the national colours. Thus it called the customs union a 'contract', and called the 'joint' tariffs 'autonomous'. This was all paid for with a 2 per cent rise in the Hungarian quota, and other benefits to the Austrian partner. In October 1907, the new, and last, Austro-Hungarian compromise was signed for a further ten-year period. The conditions and the signing of the agreement itself were a bitter disappointment to the Hungarian public. Many left the Independence Party, and people began to make an issue of the now openly-known 'April Pact' with Vienna.

The surmounting of the acute political crisis consolidated the dualist system for a while. A rising economic boom, beginning in 1906, also contributed to this. The assets of the banks rose from 4.2 million to 7.2 million crowns between 1906 and 1913, as great an increase as during the previous four decades. Industrial investment increased at a similar rate; 70-80 per cent of the increase in industrial production during the fifteen years before the war fell in the boom years. The introduction of high agrarian tariffs meant hundreds of millions of crowns in profits to landowners and capitalists, which contributed to considerable mechanization in agriculture and more intensive cultivation. But the political differences were only temporarily eased.

### The Democratic Opposition: Peasant Parties, Bourgeois Radicalism, Socialist Workers' Movement

During the period of the Coalition government, the ideals of democracy gained more and more ground among the peasantry and the bourgeoisie. One of the most significant aspects of change was the breakaway of the peasantry from the nationalist opposition of the upper classes and its growing political independence. The first democratic peasant party was established by András Achim. Achim, a wealthy farmer from Békéscsaba, was brought up in the revolutionary traditions of the Stormy Corner. He professed the same views during his career as a peasant leader; in his own words: 'I am the grandson of György Dózsa'. He was first elected chairman of a popular society in Békéscsaba, then in 1905 was elected a member of parliament. The recognition of the anti-democratic chauvinism of the Independence Party convinced him of the necessity for an independent peasant party. In March 1906, he established the Independent Socialist Peasant Party of Hungary, calling for land reform, universal suffrage, an independent customs area, progressive taxation, and social measures to protect small farmers and agricultural labourers. In practice, too, Achim endeavoured to bring about the anti-feudal union of the landed peasantry and the agrarian proletariat.

The ruling classes attacked Achim with passionate venom. He was slandered and deprived of his seat in parliament. Suits were brought against him and his paper *Paraszt Újság* (The Peasant Journal), especially when the peasant congress of 1908 fixed the bounds of a proposed land reform at all estates over a thousand *hold*. Achim directed his movement with more reckless bravery than political wisdom. He could not establish contact with the socialist working class, for which the SDP was also partly to blame, nor could he bridge the squabbles between various peasant organizations. The development of his party bogged down from 1909 onwards. And after he was shot down by the sons of a local landowner, Endre Zsilinszky, in May 1911, his party fell to pieces.

Simultaneously with Achim's, other attempts to establish parties indicated the peasants' search for an independent path. Only one of these rose to prominence: the National Independence and '48 Farmers' Party, which was established in 1909 by István Nagyatádi Szabó, a wealthy peasant from Somogy County, and called, for short, the Smallholders Party. It also had broken away from the Independents, with a democratic programme demanding universal suffrage and the abolition of feudal remnants. The party first established itself solidly

in the south of Transdanubia among the landowning peasantry, playing the part of a moderate peasant opposition. It did not become a serious political force in the country until the revolutions of 1918-9.

No matter how positive a phenomenon the independent appearance of peasant democracy was, it quickly displayed negative features, too. The divided state of the peasantry did not permit the realization of an anti-feudal, revolutionary unity; and the anorganic social development hindered the democratic forces of town and village from combining.

Meanwhile, in the cities the radical elements of the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia were also becoming conscious and forming groups. The first Hungarian offshoot of reviving European bourgeois radicalism appeared in the scholarly world, around the periodical *Huszadik Század* (Twentieth Century), established in 1900, and the Society for the Social Sciences, organized one year later. The first number of *Huszadik Század* was introduced by Herbert Spencer, whose theory of social evolution had a great influence on the Hungarian radicals. The nucleus of the new movement was formed by a sociologist group of the Budapest professional intelligentsia. Their intellectual leader was Oszkár Jászi, and alongside him stood Pál Szende, Gyula Rácz, József Madzsar, Bódog Somló, the staff of *Huszadik Század*, the highly educated, bold reformers and scholar-politicians of Hungarian progressive culture. They considered it their calling to popularize natural-scientific thought and up-to-date sociology and to analyse scientifically the social and political conditions of their country. In their view Hungary was still a fundamentally feudal country, where social progress was paralysed by the prevailing 'agrarian feudalism' and the 'finance capital' allied with it.

Bourgeois radicalism became an independent political trend at the time of the crisis of 1905. The radicals established contact first with the urban proletariat and co-operated fairly closely with the socialist workers' movement. The radicals hoped to remedy the troubles of the country by fostering bourgeois democracy, by abolishing the large estates and by granting linguistic and cultural autonomy to the nationalities. Considering the contemporary situation, their programme was progressive. The importance of the radicals arose, above all, from the factual, yet passionate criticism with which they dissected the country's conditions, and from the fermenting role, awakening people to urgent problems, with which they fostered revolution, even if they themselves were not revolutionaries. In this diffidence for action lay their main weakness. They sympathized with the peasantry and the nationalities, but their activity being characteristically urban, they could not establish close, organic ties with them.

The bourgeois radicals exercised a considerable influence on the intellectual life of the country both politically and culturally. They established the Hungarian Society of Free-Thinkers. They inspired and patronized the Galileo Circle, a new organization of the university students and centre of young leftist intellectuals. All progressive cultural movements turning against the conservative noble-nationalist tradition and all the great artists of the period had intimate ties with them.

Endre Ady, the greatest Hungarian poet of the twentieth century, who succeeded in combining the revolutionary folk and national traditions, made his first public appearance in 1905-6. Around him developed the periodical *Nyugat* (The West)—first published in 1908—reflecting all modern European intellectual trends. On its staff were the greatest poets and writers of the period, such as Zsigmond Móricz, Mihály Babits, Dezső Kosztolányi, Árpád Tóth and Frigyes Karinthy. This group of poets, primarily Babits, Kosztolányi and Tóth, were fond of English literature and did much to acquaint Hungarian readers with the best pieces of British and American poetry, past and present, in translation. The founders of modern Hungarian music, Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály, discovered and elaborated, in modern idiom, the genuine folk music of the Hungarian and neighbouring peoples. In painting, the circle of MIÉNK (initials of the Circle of Hungarian Impressionists and Naturalists) was formed with Pál Szinyei Merse, Károly Ferenczy, István Csók, Adolf Fényes, József Rippl-Rónai, and the 'Nyolcak' (the Eight), including Károly Kernstok, Róbert Berény and Bertalan Pór. In sculpture, Márk Vedres and Ferenc Medgyessy and in architecture, Béla Lajta led the progressive trend. In theatre, the Thalia Society represented modern art of a high standard, which identified itself with social struggles in aid of the oppressed.

The organization and the ideological and political struggle of the workers did not decline even during the difficult years of persecution under the Coalition government. The organizing force, the Social Democratic Party, was the most progressive political factor in Hungary at that time. It never ceased to attack the Coalition government on the questions of the franchise and political democracy, in the press, by means of agitation and with strong mass movements. An outstanding event was the country-wide mass political strike of 10 October 1907, the greatest demonstration of the period. On that day, 200,000 workers turned out in the capital and in the provinces to demand the franchise denied them by the government. In 1908, there were demonstrations ending in clashes with the police against the annexation

of Bosnia and Herzegovina and against the growing militarism. On 31 December, the workers of the iron industry in the capital repelled the government's attack, the suspension of their union, with a general strike.

In fact, the siege of the old constitution had turned into a war of attrition. The SDP was unable to weld together the democratic forces of the country or to prepare them for social transformation. Although the party leaders repeatedly referred to the feudal character of the country and sharply censured the 'feudal barbarism' and chauvinism of the ruling class, they could not find a democratic solution to the main problems of the uncompleted bourgeois revolution. The peasant movements had already declared unmistakably their demand for land reform, and the nationalities their demand for autonomy. In the other half of the empire the necessity for a federative transformation of the Monarchy had taken root in political thinking—in the programme of the Austrian SDP. Thus, the social and national struggle had taken up, with a sharpness intolerant of clichés, the specific problems relating to a democratic reorganization, yet the Hungarian SDP stood dogmatically by the general principles of the Second International. It viewed peasant aspirations and land partitioning as retrograde tendencies. In the nationality question, on the other hand, since it was reluctant to support either the Hungarian nationalist independence idea or the autonomy of the nationalities, the SDP preferred to avoid a stand on principle. The policies of the Hungarian SDP, despite the successes of its militant activities, its propaganda and organization, were characterized by a failure to keep up with the urgent demands of the historical situation and by a reformism especially unsuited to the conditions of East Central Europe.

The heterogeneous opposition within the party which emerged after 1905, radically criticized the party's reformist behaviour. The spiritual leader, theoretician and representative of a trend free of reformism (but later on outside the social democratic movement, too) was Ervin Szabó. He was the translator and commentator of the works of Marx and Engels, a socialist intellectual highly sensitive to theoretical and moral questions. He had become disillusioned with the Hungarian party and, in the course of time, with the whole International. Instead of the German type of social democracy he was attracted by the anarcho-syndicalism of the Latin countries. Despite his errors, he exercised an important stimulating influence on the opposition and on the younger generation of socialists. The leader of another opposition trend was Gyula Alpári, who had emerged from the young workers' ranks and maintained close contacts with the German

socialist left. After being expelled from the party, he attempted to establish a 'new and real' social democratic party in 1911. The new party, however, differed from the old one only in its militancy rather than in fundamental doctrines, and soon came to an end.

### Intensification of the Nationality Problem

During the period of the Coalition government, national conflicts in Hungary and in the empire as a whole heightened and were raised to international importance. The government reinstated the notorious measures of the Bánffy era. The Education Act of 1907, under Apponyi's ministry, obliged the teachers of the non-Hungarian schools to teach Hungarian well enough so that pupils finishing elementary school should have mastery in both speaking and writing. Other measures of Magyarization were prescribed, too. A mass of political trials were instituted by the government against non-Hungarian politicians. Andrej Hlinka, the Slovak priest-politician, received a sentence of two years' imprisonment because of his canvassing activity during the 1906 elections. He was suspended by his church superiors and forbidden to consecrate the church at Černova, which he himself had had erected. The matter led to serious clashes, as the peasants of Černova insisted on their priest's remaining in office. The gendarmerie intervened, and fifteen people lost their lives. During a propaganda tour abroad, Hlinka revealed the conditions of the nationalities which were responsible for the Černova massacre, and he went to prison accompanied by the sympathy of Europe.

Hungarian nationality policy met with increasingly active resistance. Among the non-Hungarian peoples, capitalism was also developing and a new bourgeois class emerging. Around the turn of the century more radical trends appeared, pushing into the background the old, conservative bourgeoisie. Among the Slovaks the new elements gathered round the periodical *Hlas* (Voice); the Hlasites were the followers of Masaryk, the protagonist of Czechoslovak unity. Akin to them was Milan Hodža, who, like Hlinka, who was engaged in organizing the Slovak Catholic party, also wished to win over the peasantry. At the beginning of the century, a new generation of the Rumanian bourgeoisie began to organize itself under the political leadership of Aurel Vlad and the spiritual leadership of Octavian Goga. Under the leadership of Jaša Tomić, the Serbs of the Voivodina founded a radical party, advocating a democratic agrarian programme under socialist slogans. The departure of the *bán* Count Khuen-Héderváry

inaugurated a new era for the Croats. In 1903, two Dalmatian politicians, Frano Supilo and Ante Trumbić, founded the 'new course' group, the pivotal idea of which was South Slav unity based on the equality of Serbs and Croats—in opposition to Austro-Hungarian imperialism. New colour was added to the political scene also by a progressive popular youth movement and by the peasant party of Stjepan Radić.

The new parties were characterized by their more democratic programmes and by their increasing efforts to realize national unity, primarily by winning over the peasantry. The Serbs and Rumanians looked to their mother countries, the Slovaks to the Czechs, but there were also some adherents of the heir apparent. It was at this time that Francis Ferdinand began to play an active part in political life. He planned to realize his basic idea, restoration of the centralized unity of the Monarchy, by crushing the Hungarian partner and making some concessions to federalism. For this scheme he gained the support of a number of non-Hungarian politicians. In Croatia, on the other hand, the majority party which emerged after the Fiume resolution, the Croat-Serb coalition, wished to form an alliance with the Hungarians, until the chauvinism of the Coalition government put an end to the encouragingly begun *rapprochement*. The Croats vehemently protested against the language by-laws of the Hungarian state railways, and their representatives obstructed proceedings, for the first time, in the Hungarian parliament. With the failure of constitutional measures, the government resorted to open absolutism in Croatia in 1908, and instituted the infamous Zagreb treason trial, based on trumped-up charges, against some of the leaders of the Croat-Serb coalition. From then onwards relations between Hungary and Croatia deteriorated irreparably. The Croats strove to realize their national aspirations partly in South Slav union, partly in a Trialist transformation of the Monarchy.

### The Foreign Policy of the Monarchy. The Annexation Crisis

The deterioration in South Slav affairs was linked with the international situation and the foreign policy of the Monarchy. The guiding principle of this foreign policy, arising from the inner needs of Austro-Hungarian dualism, was the perpetuation of the *status quo* in the Balkans, and this could only be successful while the relentless forces of historical progress did not destroy its basis. In the last decades of the



nineteenth century, the peoples of the Balkans became stronger, both socially and nationally; and conditions were now ripe for their full national independence and unification. The vital interests of the Monarchy were most threatened by Serbia, which, after the change of dynasty in 1903, took up more and more openly the mission of uniting the South Slav peoples of the Balkans. After the turn of the century, the previous friendship and dependency characterizing the relations of Serbia with the Monarchy deteriorated, and they soon became entirely hostile.

Whereas in the middle of the last century the international situation had helped the empire to surmount its internal crisis, in the first decade of the twentieth century, it only deepened the renewed crisis. The growth of national movements in the Balkans was paralleled by an intensification of the differences between the imperialist great powers. And although, in the first case, we are dealing with the last wave in the emergence of the European national states and the dissolution of the decayed multinational states of Eastern Europe, and in the second, we are dealing with conflicts between strong national states expanding into multinational colonial empires, the two processes formed a junction in the Balkans. The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy happened to be at the point of impact of these two processes.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, good relations with Britain gradually deteriorated. In 1903, the mutual agreement guaranteeing the conservative *status quo* in the Balkans was renewed with Russia, but after the defeat of the latter in the Far East and the renewal of her Balkan orientation, co-operation was again replaced by rivalry. The alliance of Britain, France and Russia, the *Entente Cordiale*, seriously damaged the international situation of the Monarchy. At the same time, Italy gradually withdrew from the Triple Alliance, and henceforth had to be considered a potential enemy rather than an ally. The Monarchy became increasingly dependent on the support of imperialist Germany.

The deterioration of her position in the Balkans prompted the foreign policy planners of the Monarchy to apply vigorous counter-measures. In the summer of 1906, they launched a tariff war against Serbia. The undertaking corresponded to the momentary economic interests of Austrian capitalists and Hungarian landowners, but its political aim was more comprehensive—to force Serbia back to her former dependent position. The failure of the tariff war created a serious dilemma in the Monarchy's foreign policy. The chief of staff, Conrad von Hötzendorf, with the obsession of a Cato, advocated a 'preventive war' against Serbia. Conservative circles saw a way out in

agreement and partition with Russia. The Hungarian ruling classes were against conquest and war in the Balkans, because they threatened the future of dualism. The minister of foreign affairs, Count Aehrenthal, tried to solve the dilemma in a contradictory fashion appropriate to the situation. He wished to preserve the *status quo*, on the one hand, but to restore shaken prestige and to shore up wavering positions on the other. This contradictory situation of the Monarchy led to the halfway solution embodied in the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 6 October 1908.

The annexation, though hastened by the outbreak of the Young Turk revolution, was directed against the national aspirations for unity of the South Slav peoples. It naturally produced violent protest from these peoples and from the interested great powers, arousing a war scare early in 1909. Serbia was especially restless and was willing to recognize the annexation only in return for considerable compensation. On the advice of her protectors, however, she acquiesced in March 1909. Apart from a dubious rise in prestige the Monarchy gained nothing from the diplomatic victory but enemies preparing to strike back. In the following years, Russian diplomacy actively and successfully organized the alliance of the Balkan states against Turkey, and partly against the Monarchy. The Hungarian government, though it had some reservations as regards the annexation, supported the foreign policy of Aehrenthal, the more so as its own nationality policy contributed in no small measure to the sharpening in antagonisms of the Monarchy.

#### The Party of National Work. On the Road to the World War

The Coalition government did not last long. Being in power soon consumed the forces cleverly built up in the first years of the century. The mass basis of the new regime fell away first. The majority of its adherents turned away, disillusioned with the speculation with nationalist slogans, the promises of achievements never carried into effect. In protest against the compromise of 1907, several small groups left the Independence Party itself. The enervating crisis then deepened seriously from the beginning of 1909 onwards, when the debate on the state bank began.

The compromise of 1907 had not affected the charter of the Austro-Hungarian Bank, which was to expire at the end of 1910. The chance for some sort of national achievement, thus, seemed not unlikely

under a new arrangement. The left wing of the Independence Party at once insisted upon an independent bank. The demand was formally accepted by the partners in the Coalition, and also by the government, but the Austrian government did not accept any part of it. In this way the bank question brought differences to the surface. It also brought an end to the discussions, and to the government, which resigned.

The agony of the Coalition was long drawn out. In November 1909, the Independence Party broke in two. The larger faction, under Gyula Justh, wanted to continue the old liberal-nationalist traditions of the party and demanded in its programme an independent bank and universal suffrage. The other segment, the Kossuth faction, made unprincipled advances towards the adherents of 1867. Tisza now came forward again with his revived liberal cadres. It could only have surprised those members of the Coalition who believed their own illusions when, in January 1910, not they but Tisza's friend, Károly Khuen-Héderváry, was asked to form a cabinet.

The four-year government of the Coalition proved that the slogans of the nationalist upper-class opposition were entirely false. It also revealed that the rigid system of dualism was not suitable to rotation in power. The ruling circles of the Monarchy had returned to the old methods of government.

The government of Khuen-Héderváry was supported by the re-organized liberal old guard. The new party, established in February 1910, assumed the grandiloquent name of Party of National Work. It tried thus to conceal that its character and basis were formed by the staunchest adherents of the 1867 Compromise among the landowners and upper bourgeoisie. The party represented a united alliance of the ruling classes, who, putting aside their internal strife of the past decade, were concentrating all the forces of reaction on preparation for war and on the fight against democracy. In the atmosphere of widespread disillusion with the Coalition government (and through the considerable financial support of the big banks), the new government party gained a two-thirds majority at the elections of June 1910. The Independence Party factions suffered a great defeat.

The consolidation established by the Party of National Work government lasted only until the Army Bill, that is, the military question, again came up on the agenda. In the tense international situation, the government could not evade the issue. The new Army Bill, submitted in May 1911, reunited the dispersed opposition. The strong point of its new unity lay in the fact that the centre of gravity had now shifted to the left. A bloc came into being of the Justh party, the radicals and the SDP, who, when discussing the military question no longer viewed

it as a constitutional issue but from the standpoint of electoral reform and the struggle against militarism. The prolonged obstruction of the Army Bill, hacked up on this occasion by the mass demonstrations of the workers, led finally to the fall of Khuen-Héderváry, who had refrained from using force against it. In April 1912, László Lukács was appointed prime minister, but the decisive step was the election of István Tisza as Speaker of the House on 22 May. This was an open challenge to the opposition.

The following day, the workers of Budapest and its outer districts streamed in hosts towards parliament, to the demonstration planned by the SDP. They broke through the police cordon, stood up against the bayonets, and continued to fight behind barricades against military forces, hussar companies and mounted police. At several points in the city, the clashes developed into pitched battles. At the climax of the engagement, the SDP ordered a retreat, but the workers continued to resist during the night, by gaslight, and the turbulence spread the following day to the provinces. 'Bloody Thursday' was the most considerable revolutionary action of the period, but the attacks of the reactionary forces could not be checked.

After the defeat of the 23 May demonstration, Tisza, unmindful of an attempt against his life or of the clamour of the opposition, arbitrarily ended the parliamentary debate. Protesting members were forcibly removed from the House. He succeeded thus in crushing the obstruction, voting the Army Bill and carrying other militarist bills concerning army service and emergency powers in the event of war. Tisza's onslaught, nevertheless, could not disperse the new camp of democracy. This was not because the opposition, boycotting the House, had formed a kind of 'branch-parliament', but because the radical intelligentsia was agitating with revolutionary fervour. The popularity of the Justh party gained in proportion, and it was now joined by the future leading figure of bourgeois democracy, Mihály Károlyi.

The democratic forces prepared to strike back. An excellent chance was presented by the Franchise Bill proposed by the government at the end of 1912. The changes proposed were so minimal that the bill could not be considered a reform. The SDP immediately sounded the alarm, and for two full months, in co-operation with the progressive intelligentsia, and with the sympathy of the nationalities, the middle and petty bourgeoisie, it organized the attack—in the form of a massive and political general strike announced for the beginning of March. At the last moment, however, fearing the retaliation of its determined adversary, the party leadership called off the action and postponed it until a 'more propitious time'.

László Lukács fell from power when shady business dealings were proven against him, and in June 1913, Tisza himself replaced him. War was already being waged in the Balkans, in the immediate vicinity of the Monarchy. Thus, as prime minister, Tisza regarded the establishment of domestic order as his first task.

In 1913, at the price of minor concessions (the abandonment of overt absolutism), he superficially normalized the embittered relations with Croatia. With a view towards discussions with Rumania, he started talks with Rumanian politicians inside Hungary, too, but owing to the petty nationalism of the leading circles, no agreement could be reached. He was successful, however, in smoothing over the differences within the ruling classes. The economic basis of the differences between the agrarians and mercantilists had, in the course of time, diminished, and conservatism had become a connecting link among the members of the ruling élite. Tisza worked with tremendous perseverance on the forging of a united front of reaction, in which the pro-Habsburg Count Zichy, as well as the 'nationalist' Apponyi, liberal finance capital, the anti-semitic gentry, Protestant leaders and the Catholic clergy arming for 'the new counter-reformation' would all have their places.

The democratic camp began to recover somewhat from its defeat of the previous year only in the spring of 1914. In June 1914, the bourgeois radicals formally founded their party, with a democratic programme, including land reform. The Independence Party, which in 1909 had split in two, merged again in 1913. Although the united party was heterogeneous, its political line was soon marked out by its new chairman, Mihály Károlyi, who at this time was already veering towards the democratic camp. Károlyi was clearly an adherent and spokesman of a new, pro-Entente trend in foreign policy. In this new policy the Francophile tradition of the Independence Party of the post-Compromise period was revived, in combination with the progressive pro-Western attitude of the democratic opposition in the early years of the century. In the spring of 1914, Károlyi attended discussions in Paris, then in June went to the United States in search of friends for the democratic opposition (which was turning against the alliance with Germany), and also to raise funds for the elections to be held the following year.

But it was not to be the fate of a belated Hungarian democracy to reorganize its ranks under peaceful conditions. On 28 June 1914, in Sarajevo, a Serbian student, Gavrilo Princip, assassinated the heir apparent Francis Ferdinand and his consort.

### 3. THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE MONARCHY (1914-1918)

#### *The Monarchy and the Outbreak of the First World War*

The murder at Sarajevo provided the final shock of a ten-year crisis, during which the leaders of the Monarchy had come to accept the necessity of a war of aggression, even if it was a very risky undertaking indeed. For decades, the guiding principle in the foreign policy of the Monarchy had been one of conservative defence. This guiding principle was corroded, to be sure, by the shift in the balance of power in the first decade of the twentieth century, and was even formally violated at the time of the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but the responsible leadership of the Monarchy had not yet espoused the idea of aggression. The Balkan Wars of 1912-3, however, so radically altered the balance of power in favour of Serbia, and of her patron, Russia, that even the demands of mere defence, the preservation of territorial integrity and of great-power status suggested a war of aggression.

As early as the time of the first Balkan War, when Turkey was severely defeated and Serbia victorious, the government had inclined towards intervention, but it had not come to that. The parallel strengthening of Bulgaria and the establishment of a new Albanian state dependent on the Triple Alliance seemed, for the time being, a sufficient counter-balance. During the second Balkan War, when Bulgaria was being defeated, the new foreign minister, Leopold Berchtold, again considered armed intervention, but on this occasion was dissuaded by Austria-Hungary's German ally. The Treaty of Bucharest, which concluded the war (with a substantial increase in the territory and the self-assurance of Serbia and Rumania), cut so deeply into the vital interests of the Monarchy that the ruling circles were forced to revise their long-established principles of foreign policy. The turning-point came in August 1913, when it was officially decided to settle with Serbia once and for all. Taking into account the extremely unfavourable international situation, the two moulders of foreign policy, Berchtold and István Tisza, drafted a long-range programme at this time. The three pillars of this policy were: assurance of the unconditional support of Germany for the new Balkan policy, Bulgaria's

entry into the Triple Alliance, and the alliance or at least neutrality of Rumania between the two power blocs in the expected war.

The key issue in this programme was a more effective co-ordination of the foreign policies of Austria-Hungary and Germany, because in the years preceding the war the interests and aims of the two allied powers had been divergent in a number of matters. The Dual Monarchy inadequately supported Germany in the conflicts brought about by German attempts to acquire colonies; the Monarchy held aloof especially in Germany's intensifying competition with Britain. On the other hand, Germany did not identify herself completely with Austria-Hungary's Balkan policy; their divergences centred mainly on Rumania and Bulgaria, and relations with Italy. The German government regarded Bulgaria as unreliable, and instead stressed the importance of winning over or rather keeping as allies Rumania and Italy, two countries which she regarded as trustworthy, and in order to do this Germany was even ready to make territorial sacrifices—to the detriment of the Monarchy. Under such conditions, it is quite understandable that the leaders of Austria-Hungary exploited every opportunity—including the Emperor William's visits of March and June 1914—to convince their ally of the correctness of their policy in the Balkans.

Initially the new foreign policy had hardly any successes to chalk up; on the contrary, it had met with setbacks and obstacles at every point in the first half of 1914, when the news of the Sarajevo murder arrived. Those responsible for foreign and military affairs considered the murder an excellent pretext, and also a politically and psychologically opportune moment, for a showdown with Serhia. With this in mind Berchtold opened diplomatic preparations on 30 June, and Conrad started military preparations. Final decision was postponed for a while owing to Tisza's opposition. Tisza stood by the earlier long-term programme, not considering the balance of forces favourable. He argued that exhausted Bulgaria could not be counted on militarily, and that Rumania was politically unreliable. These factors rendered the outcome of a war uncertain, especially the fate of defenceless Transylvania. At the beginning of July, Tisza would have been content with energetic diplomatic measures to humiliate Serbia. For two weeks the debate continued within the joint government, and it was finally settled by the German stand and by Francis Joseph himself.

In the summer of 1914, Germany was better prepared for war than her adversaries. For this reason the German government considered the moment propitious for war, although they, too, reckoned at first only on a localized war in the Balkans. In the beginning they only

encouraged the Dual Monarchy to declare war, but later on they urged haste upon her. They also made it clear to Tisza that the chances of success in the future were worse than those of the present, and that their unconditional support was valid only in the given situation; it could not be extended. When, on 12 July, the emperor expressly called upon him to accept the majority view, Tisza yielded. Thus the ultimatum containing the unacceptable demands was constructed in full unanimity, and delivered to Serhia on 23 July. Tisza stipulated only that Serhia not be annexed to the Monarchy.

The Serhian reply, though conciliatory enough, could no longer alter the decision. The Monarchy refused to negotiate. On 28 July, she declared war on Serhia. Within a few days, it was followed by the other declarations of war: Russia on the Dual Monarchy, Germany on Russia and France, and Britain on Germany. Within days, the war intended as a local affair developed into a world war. The murder had been a mere excuse. Germany aimed at European supremacy and the acquisition of colonies; the Entente Powers likewise entered the war for conquest, for the securing of 'sphere of interest', and to crush a dangerous enemy. In the imperialist world conflict the nationality problems of East Central Europe played but a secondary role.

The war in Hungary, just as in the other helligerent countries, roused nationalist passions. The government party and the opposition, the churches and some non-Hungarian politicians all formed a united front with loyal enthusiasm. The parliamentary opposition offered its help to Tisza, and the priests blessed the cannon. Even the leading parties of the Second International did not remain immune from the effects of the war hysteria. The SDP of Hungary, not having parliamentary representation, could not vote the war credits, but in its newspaper and propaganda it affirmed for a good while the progressive nature of the struggle against 'czarist barbarism', and it supported the war effort of the Central Powers. Even the man in the street and the soldiers were infected by the hysteria. When the emperor's manifesto, 'I have deeply considered what I have done', was issued, the companies marched off to the accompaniment of music, flowers and guards of honour, hoping soon to return home victorious.

### **The Battle Front and the Home Front in the Opening Years of the War**

The main theatres of war were France in the west, and Poland and Russia in the east. After overrunning neutral Belgium, the Germans drove on towards Paris, but the united British-French forces stopped

the offensive in the battle of the Marne (6–10 September 1914). With this, the *Blitzkrieg* was frustrated. A long war of attrition began in the west, in which neither side, despite tremendous material and human losses, could wrest a victory, or even a lasting superiority. The war against Serbia began immediately with a defeat for the Central Powers, with the disastrous Drina campaign (12–13 August). An unexpectedly quick Russian mobilization contributed to the failures both in the west and south. In the autumn of 1914, the Russian 'steam-roller' advanced irresistibly on Cracow and the Carpathians. The united German and Austro-Hungarian forces under Hindenburg's command could not stop them before the middle of December.

During the following years, the world war expanded and raged with even greater fury. The fall of the important Galician fortress of Przemyśl (22 March 1915) led to a concentrated counter-attack by the Central Powers. After the break-through at Gorlice (2 May) the front moved forward hundreds of kilometres into Russian territory. Trench warfare, lasting for a year, ended with the Brusilov offensive (June and July 1916) and brought the Russians once again to the Carpathians. Until the adherence of Turkey in the autumn of 1914, the Central Powers were in a fairly difficult situation. Her attack on the Russian front in the Caucasus helped to lessen the pressure on the eastern front of the Central Powers. This was particularly important when Italy's entrance into the war on the side of the Entente on 23 May 1915 led to the opening of a new front in the south. On the southern slopes of the Alps, along the Isonzo river, fierce fighting went on for three years, in which many Hungarian regiments took part. In October 1915, Bulgaria entered the war on the side of the Central Powers. Serbia, now being attacked from several quarters at the same time, was defeated and occupied. A similar fate met Rumania, which pounced on the Monarchy at a seemingly opportune moment (25 August 1916) and broke into Transylvania with fresh troops. A counter-attack, however, finished off the Rumanian army within a short time, and the Central Powers were able to occupy almost the whole of Rumania.

During the third year of the war, both sides showed signs of exhaustion, especially Russia and the Dual Monarchy. Their losses in lives exceeded three and a half millions. The striking power of their armies diminished, their material strength deteriorated. The home fronts suffered grave privations. The exceptional conditions of the war also dislocated the economic life of Hungary. The factories producing war equipment were taken over by the military authorities and supplied with raw materials and manpower, but shortages became increasingly acute in consumer goods. Nothing could relieve the dearth; neither

coercive measures like requisitioning and rationing nor the establishment of public sales and distribution centres could solve the problem. These monopolistic centres became the hotbeds of corruption and graft, helping black-market profiteering, which became extremely widespread during the war years.

The living conditions of the population deteriorated sharply as early as the first years of the war. There was hardly a family which was not missing or mourning someone, generally the bread-winner. The value of bank-notes decreased from month to month owing to rapid inflation. The inflation became unbearable owing to the shortages of food, fuel and clothing, the usurious black market and the compulsory signing of war loans, which were raised on eight occasions. The initial enthusiasm quickly evaporated and was replaced by discontent with the senseless war. From 1916 onwards, the workers' movement began to revive. After the first few months, the SDP desisted from justifying the war. From the end of 1914, it preached pacifism and tried to reduce the material degradation of the workers. Early in 1916, it succeeded in having set up the so-called 'complaint committees' in the militarized factories, and these actually considered some of the workers' complaints, although there was little they could do about them.

Exhaustion and hopelessness also activated higher political circles. By 1916, the united front of the first days had slackened. The opposition began to give voice to the lack of confidence in the military leadership and to the wrongs done to the Hungarians. Mihály Károlyi founded a new Independence Party, with a pro-Entente orientation and with a programme of peace without annexation and far-reaching reforms at home.

### The Turning Point of 1917

In November 1916, Francis Joseph died. With him a whole era was buried. The new king-emperor, Charles IV, tried to fend off impending catastrophe with a more flexible policy. He introduced personal changes in the highest leadership which signalled change towards the oppressed nations and the Entente. At his urging the Central Powers came forward with peace proposals at the end of 1916.

This initiative was not an isolated phenomenon. In January 1917, Wilson, the president of the United States, proclaimed the principle of 'peace without victory'. Secret negotiations began between the belligerent countries; at this time the Entente Powers did not yet aim to



dissolve the Dual Monarchy. Under the impact of growing exhaustion and desire for peace, the imperialist governments considered ways of ending the ever more risky war.

On 12 March (27 February) 1917, popular revolution destroyed czarism in Russia. This event produced world-wide echoes. As the congratulatory statement of the SDP put it, 'it struck a mortal blow at every despotic power of the world'. In Hungary, too, it encouraged the workers' movement to spring into action against the distress of the war. In the spring of 1917, in defiance of military discipline, strikes broke out in such key industries as transport, mining and armaments. Hundreds of thousands celebrated May Day once more. Organization began to unite ever wider sections of the working people; membership of trade unions rose to over 200,000. The progressive intelligentsia recovered its voice; it agitated against the war and came forward with social demands. New periodicals were started, and new socialist groups were formed.

An additional proof of the long-standing short-sightedness of the political leading circles was the way in which they welcomed the 'anarchy' in Russia. They believed it would make victory more certain for the Central Powers. Only Károlyi insisted on a sincere change in direction, for he regarded the victory of either the Germans or the Entente Powers as fatal to Hungary. He looked for a way out in a speedy separate peace and democratic reforms. He considered peace realizable on the basis of the Wilsonian principles. The young ruler also favoured certain reforms, and therefore, in May 1917, he dismissed Tisza, who obstinately opposed every change. In his place he first appointed Count Móric Esterházy, a young aristocrat belonging to the moderate opposition, then, after his withdrawal, the master of manoeuvre in critical situations—Wckerle. The new government announced electoral reform, under pressure from the 'Franchise Bloc', reorganized in May, and including the Károlyi party, the radicals, other democratic groups and the SDP, which was hacking its demands with massive demonstrations.

Charles IV began fresh peace moves, both officially and in secret. The foreign policy leadership of the Monarchy tried to establish contact with the Entente Powers through the United States. The precondition of definitive discussions, however, was an immediate separate peace, for which neither Foreign Minister Czernin nor the military leadership dependent on the German General Staff dared to undertake the responsibility. Instead, they endeavoured to convince their German ally, by revealing the catastrophic material situation of the Monarchy, of the urgent need for peace. The German imperialists,

however, still believed that they could win, and they were not willing to give up their conquests. In the spring of 1917, Charles IV, through the mediation of his brother-in-law, Sixtus, Prince of Parma, made secret peace offers to the French. The Entente Powers did not take this proposal seriously either, and later even made it public.

After the entry of the United States into the war in April, the diplomatic prospects worsened, but peace attempts did not cease. In May 1917, the Social Democratic parties of the Central Powers and of the neutral countries met for peace talks in Stockholm. The Austrian and Hungarian delegates at this futile meeting supported the integrity of the Monarchy, and at the same time urged a peace without annexation. Károlyi's visit to Switzerland in the autumn of the same year had a similar purpose and results. All actions exhorting the imperialist governments to make peace, however, had no results.

The military and diplomatic moves of the imperialist powers were crossed by a momentous event. On 7 November 1917, the socialist revolution was victorious in Russia. With this there culminated the great change which had begun in early 1917.

### **The Development of a Revolutionary Situation in 1918**

The achievement and the decrees of the October Revolution, especially the peace manifesto, awakened enormous interest and sympathy in Hungary. On 25 November, several hundred thousand people turned out for a mass meeting held in the Hall of Industry at which the workers cheered the socialist revolution and expressly demanded a general strike and the formation of workers' councils. Under the impact of the historic events a revolutionary mood grew up throughout the country which also took shape in the appearance of new tendencies. Within the Social Democratic Party and the trade unions the old left wing reconstituted itself and was quickly joined by new opposition forces. A new revolutionary nucleus emerged from among the technical intelligentsia gathered in the Office Employees' Union and from among the socialist students of the Galileo Circle. The latter, together with workers dissatisfied with the party leadership, formed the group of 'Revolutionary Socialists', who wanted to follow the example of the Russian Revolution.

The socialists followed with keen interest the peace talks between the Soviet government and the Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk. A number of demonstrations took place against the aggressive demands of German imperialism. In the middle of January 1918, a large-

scale strike in support of the Soviets broke out in Vienna and spread all over Austria. On 18 January, it swept Budapest as well. In this strike, which lasted three days and spread out over the whole country, more than half a million workers took part. In a few places workers' councils were also set up. In this menacing situation Wekerle, the prime minister, promised everything, and the leaders of the Social Democratic Party believed him. Instead of reforms, however, the government introduced retaliatory measures against all revolutionary action or propaganda. In February 1918, prisoners of war returning from Russia were placed in quarantine for screening; the Galileo Circle was banned; revolutionary leaders were arrested; and a special security headquarters was set up to defend 'internal order'.

In spite of these measures of terror, the mass movement in the spring of 1918 was demanding radical change. Similarly, the nationality movements also went beyond their modest pre-war programmes and proposed a radical reorganization of the whole of South-Eastern Europe. Some politicians of the peoples of the Monarchy had emigrated at the outbreak of the war and placed themselves under the protection of the Entente Powers. The Croatian exiles in London established the Yugoslav Committee (1 May 1915). They endeavoured to win the support of the Entente, and also the government of Serbia and the Croatian people, for the establishment of a democratic, federative Yugoslavia. The Serbs only agreed after their defeat (the Corfu declaration, 20 July 1917). At first the Entente also offered only territorial compensation. The Czech and Slovak exiles made Paris their headquarters. The Czech Commission Abroad, later the Czecho-Slovak National Council, established under Masaryk in February 1916, formulated the programme for an independent Czecho-Slovak state. The Rumanians did not establish a committee of exiles, making their behaviour dependent on the fate of the mother country.

Until 1917, the exile committees could not rely on actual national movements at home. The strategy of the national parties in the Dual Monarchy was guided by the opportunist assumption that the fate of their peoples would not be decided in parliaments or in demonstrations but on the battlefields. During the first years of the war they had been passive. Only in the spring of 1917, did the Croats speak out for the constitutional independence of the South Slav peoples of the Monarchy, and the national leaders of Austria called for federative reorganization. Despite the new upsurge of national movements, however, the Austrian and Hungarian Social Democrats opposed the dismemberment of the great territorial unity into small nation-states and continued to support the integrity of the Monarchy.

In the second half of 1917, the Germans had suffered tremendous losses on the western front in the 'hundred days' battle of Flanders and at the break-through of the British tanks at Cambrai (20 November 1917). From the spring of 1918 onwards, relieved of their burden on the eastern front, they concentrated their forces in France. The united Entente forces under Marshal Foch, however, again stopped the renewed German offensive at the Marne. The last German offensive (15 July) ended in a disorganized retreat. The final break-through attempt of the Austro-Hungarian forces along the Piave also met with the same catastrophic end.

By 1918, the army was gradually disintegrating. The first large-scale mutiny broke out early in February in the Cattaro fleet; it was primarily inspired by socialist ideas. Disobedience of orders and desertion became the order of the day. By the summer, the number of deserters had exceeded a hundred thousand; most of them went into hiding in the country, but in some places they formed into guerrilla groups. On 20 May, a mutiny broke out at Pécs. The soldiers occupied the barracks and the railway station, and could be disarmed only after a lengthy battle. Parallel to the mutinies, resistance also was begun by the starving people of the country, and an irresistible series of strikes was organized. Prisoners of war returning from Russia played an important role in these actions. About half a million soldiers languishing in Russian prison camps had been liberated by the revolution. A great number of them joined the Russian Red Army, many participated in the activities of the Hungarian group of the Bolshevik Party. Those who returned, whether they were conscripted again or reached home, propagated the ideas of the great revolution.

From the middle of 1918, the situation became extremely tense on the home front. Austria was near starvation; in Hungary there were daily increasing shortages of food, fuel and raw materials. The real wages of workers sank to 53 per cent of the pre-war level, that of day-labourers to 46 per cent and that of employees to 33 per cent. The hungry and desperate working people were very susceptible to the revolutionary ideas which were breaking through the frontiers and front lines. The greatest action of the period started on 20 June, at the MÁVAG plant in Budapest, where the military commander had ordered workers to be fired on. Within a few hours all factories in Budapest had stopped work, and the workers of the provinces followed suit the next day. In the general strike which lasted for 9 days, half a million workers demanded the end of the war and the immediate resignation of the government. The strike was brought to an end, not primarily by martial law but by the moderating influence of the SDP.

Unrest also spread to the territories of the nationalities. The October Revolution in Russia had a contradictory influence on the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois trends of the national movements. They were attracted by the idea of self-determination, but were repelled by the peril of a socialist revolution. For this reason they endeavoured, first, to obtain the unequivocal support of the Entente and, secondly, to organize national united fronts under bourgeois leadership. Among the Czechs, Slovaks, Croats and Slovenes national unity became a reality with the adherence of the Social Democrats and peasant parties under the leadership of bourgeois parties and programmes of independence.

The upsurge of the national movements provided the exile committees with powerful arguments and support. They could now present their programmes as the desire of national sentiment and, at the same time, appeal to the danger of revolutions. At that time the Entente Powers also changed their attitude to the Dual Monarchy. From the viewpoint of both military interests and of a safeguard against revolution, they looked upon potential new bourgeois-national states as more reliable than the decaying and dissolving Dual Monarchy, still in the clutches of German imperialism. After Masaryk's visit to the United States in May and the subsequent Pittsburgh Agreement between Czechs and Slovaks, the Entente recognized the Czecho-Slovak National Council as a belligerent ally. The fulfilment of territorial claims was promised to the Yugoslav Committee and later to the Rumanian National Committee, formed in the summer of 1918.

The military and political crisis of the Monarchy became acute in the summer of 1918. A revolutionary situation was developing under the real possibility that the Monarchy—and the dualist system—would be defeated. The given international, military and internal situation was conducive to the break-up of the Monarchy into national states, with the leadership of bourgeois forces, on the basis and with the aid of the Entente's military victory. In theory at least, it was also possible that the system could be overthrown by revolution, with the leadership of the socialist working class and on the basis of the solidarity of the peoples of the Monarchy. The Austrian and Hungarian Social Democratic parties, in the revolutionary situation, when the apparatus of repression was shattered and the army in disintegration, did not prepare the revolution led by the working class. They drifted along with the course of events, evading any decisions. In the hour of the final crisis, they allowed the initiative to pass to the bourgeoisie. With this they made it possible or made it easier that, from the revolutionary situation, not a socialist transition (and national self-determination

within the framework of this) should emerge, but, instead, bourgeois-national state formations hostile to socialist revolution. The socialist forces of the oppressed nations joined their own national, united fronts.

### **The Dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy**

The collapse began on the Balkan front. Bulgaria surrendered at the end of September, Turkey a few weeks later. The armies of the Dual Monarchy were no longer sufficient to fill the gaping hole in the southern front. The Austro-Hungarian government—somewhat belatedly—sought to find the road of escape in immediate peace talks. It appealed to the United States, declaring its readiness to accept Wilson's Fourteen Points as the basis for negotiations. Charles IV, as a sign of good faith, pronounced Austria a federal state on 16 October; he did not, however, touch the integrity of 'the Lands of the Hungarian Crown'. One by one, the national councils rejected the imperial manifesto. By now they demanded full independence. The White House also coolly refused to deal with the request for peace. In the changed situation mere autonomy was no longer sufficient; the peoples of the Monarchy, stated Washington's message, can judge for themselves in what form they wish to organize their state existence.

Even in the days of the final crisis the leading political élite in Hungary did not have the courage to face the truth. Early in October there was still talk of territorial claims. As a result of the imperial manifesto of 16 October, Wekerle submitted a motion for changing over to a 'personal union'. It was then that Mihály Károlyi revealed the gravity of the situation in a dramatic speech in the House. He called for immediate peace, a change of government and democratization. The reactionary majority shouted him down, but on the following day even Tisza confessed: 'We have lost the war'. On 23 October the Wekerle government resigned, deserting the sinking ship.

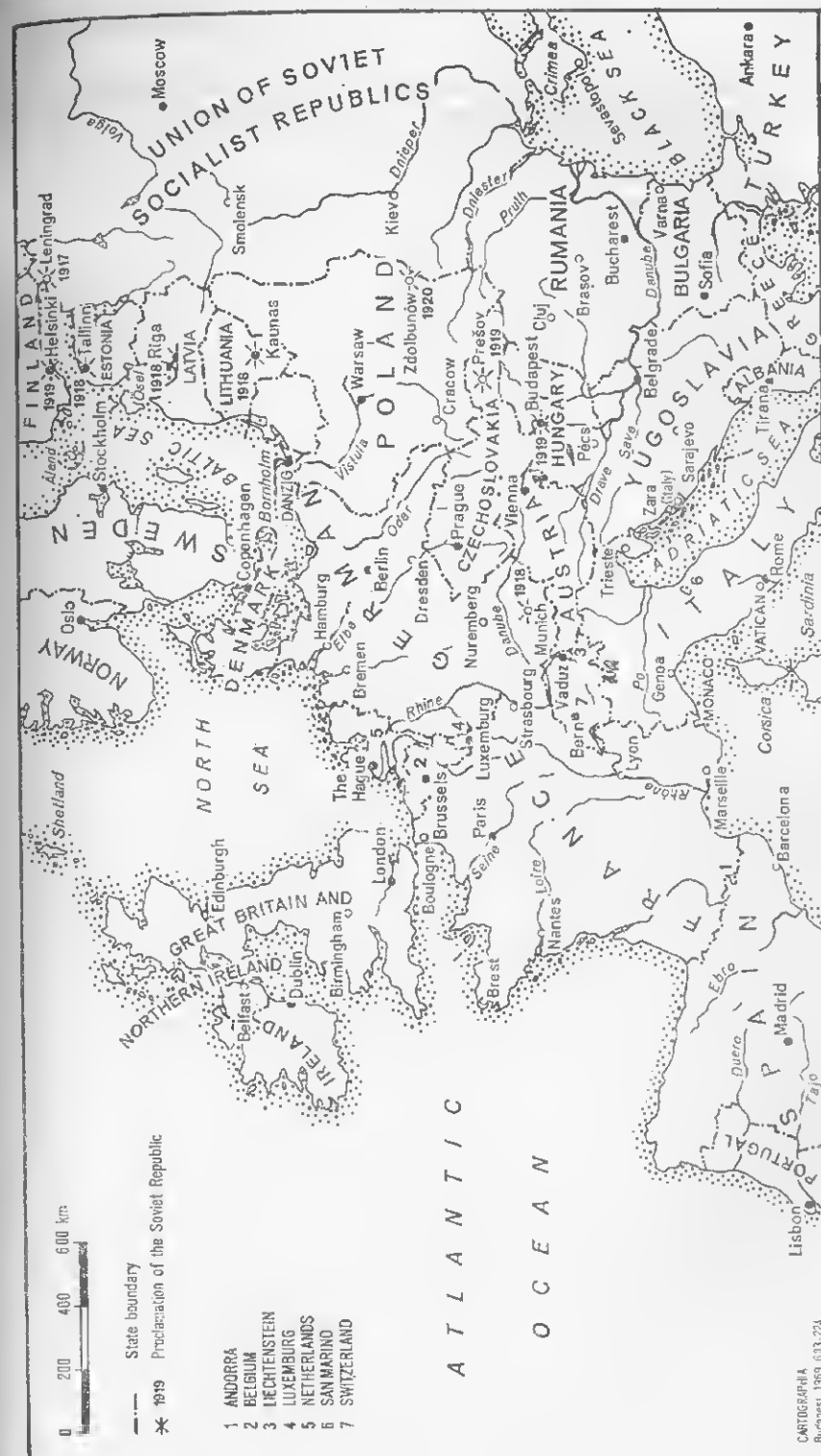
The certainty of catastrophe caused panic among the middle classes, the petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia; they now looked upon Károlyi as their only hope, and they joined the supporters of democracy. At an extraordinary congress held in the middle of October, the party leadership of the SDP, although not considering Soviet policy suitable in Hungary, mobilized the working class to fight for a 'people's government'. Relying on the widest public support, Károlyi established, on 25 October, the National Council, consisting of representatives of his own party and of the radicals and Social Democrats.

An appeal, containing 12 points, summarized the programme of the National Council. There were demands for independence, separate peace, universal suffrage, land reform, the recognition of the Czech, Polish and South Slav national states, and the Wilsonian right of self-determination of the nationalities of Hungary. The appeal expressed the hope that 'these principles will not only not prejudice the territorial integrity of Hungary but will place it on the most secure foundations'.

More and more people looked upon the National Council as the actual government; day after day it was greeted by demonstrations of sympathy, and the party premises were visited by more and more delegations expressing their support. On 28 October, a large crowd marched to Castle Hill in Buda to demand the naming of a Károlyi government. At the Chain Bridge the police fired into the crowd. This event aroused even greater passions. The workers armed themselves and established workers' councils. A soldiers' council was also set up. The old ruling élite stubbornly and, even from its own viewpoint, irrationally opposed the change of direction. Under their influence the king appointed not Károlyi as prime minister, but Count János Hadik. Count Gyula Andrássy became joint minister of foreign affairs. But the government lacked any real power. The bulk of the army backed the National Council. Andrássy rapidly broke off the German alliance, and in the name of the government of the Dual Monarchy asked the Entente for an armistice.

The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy only existed as a historical-legal term by then. On 28 October the Czech, on the 30th the Slovak National Council announced the establishment of the independent Czechoslovak state. On 29 October, the parliament of Croatia declared for joining the unitary Yugoslav state. The Rumanian National Council in the Bukovina announced its secession from the Monarchy on 27 October, the Ukrainians of Galicia on the 31st. On the 30th the National Assembly in Vienna accepted the temporary constitution of the new Austrian state. On the 31st, the Italian front collapsed, and the general staff asked for an armistice. On the same day the democratic revolution was victorious in Budapest.

The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was a historic necessity. In the nineteenth century the multinational empire solved only insufficiently and ambiguously the social and national tasks of bourgeois transformation. It could not lastingly harmonize the survival of the empire with the demands of the democratic, national development of its peoples. Even if it did provide some sort of economic, political and cultural benefits to peoples other than the Hungarians



and Austrian Germans, it nevertheless obstructed free national development and democratization. Its collapse consequently was not brought about either by war or defeat, but by its own system of government; its social and political conditions were responsible for the war and for the defeat, which then produced favourable conditions for the victory of national forces aiming at its dissolution.

*Chapter VIII***REVOLUTION IN HUNGARY  
(1918-1919)**



## I. THE BOURGEOIS DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

### **The Hungarian October Revolution. Formation of the Károlyi Government**

On 30 October 1918, just as on the preceding days, crowds of soldiers and workers demonstrated in the streets of Budapest. They held impromptu meetings in front of the headquarters of the National Council and the premises of Count Mihály Károlyi's party, where the officers and soldiers pledged their allegiance to the National Council. The people thronging along the main thoroughfares knocked the Austrian double-headed eagle and the German-language inscriptions off the signs in front of the shops. At dawn on the 31st, soldiers and civilians occupied the city commandant's headquarters, took over the public buildings and took control of the Post Office. The iron-fisted commandant of the city, appointed only a few days before precisely to maintain order, did not dare command his troops to fire upon the crowd. Indeed it was hardly likely that he could have found units that would have carried out his orders: large masses of the army already had declared their loyalty to the National Council.

On 31 October, the victory of the revolution was celebrated with jubilation in the capital, with the people wearing chrysanthemums. Count Hadik's government resigned, the revolutionary soldiers arrested the city commandant and the king called on Count Mihály Károlyi to form a government.

The new coalition government was formed on 31 October, with the participation of Károlyi's Independence and '48 Party, the Bourgeois Radical Party and the Social Democratic Party. Károlyi and the revolutionary government took the oath of office to Charles IV. The government, in its programme, pledged itself to introduce legislation for independence, universal suffrage and the secret ballot, civil rights and social reform, and land reform.

Hatred of the regime that had been responsible for the war was so intense that its supporters did not dare to oppose the masses of workers and soldiers. The seizure of power took place without an armed struggle. Only István Tisza, who was seen as a symbol of the old dualist, conservative Hungary, was killed by an assassin.

However, the events of the early days of November threw light on the antagonism between the government on the one hand and the workers and landless masses on the other. On 1 November demands were being voiced at factory meetings and street demonstrations for the proclamation of the republic. In the countryside, at the news of the revolution, the village population seized and distributed the food stores of the large estates, shops and military warehouses, drove off a considerable part of the civil servants of the local government administration and disarmed local gendarmerie units. From the eastern part of the country came scattered reports of arbitrary seizures of the large landed estates. Soldiers returning home from the various battle fronts and from prisoner-of-war camps in Russia played a leading role in these actions. In factories, provincial towns and villages, councils of workers came into existence, and in the army the soldiers formed their own councils and dismissed some of the officers.

The government and the parties backing it saw the events of 31 October as the end of a revolutionary process; but the workers, soldiers and landless peasants regarded them as only the starting-point, the beginning of a radical and democratic transformation. On 2 November, the government and the Budapest Central Workers' Council, formed at the initiative of the Social Democratic Party, called upon the population to observe law and order and to wait for the government's decrees. They issued instructions for the surrender of all arms and began to organize a national guard for the preservation of order. They wanted to carry out the democratic transformation within a legal framework, at a moderate pace. Nevertheless, Károlyi and his government, bowing to the popular will, were compelled to ask the king to release them from their oath, and following the examples of Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, the National Council on 16 November proclaimed the transformation of Hungary into a people's republic.

#### **Armistice.**

#### **Power Relations in Home and Foreign Policy**

On 3 November, representatives of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy signed an armistice agreement in Padua which did not contain any detailed provisions regarding the frontiers of Hungary. But the Balkan army of the Entente Powers continued to advance, and this, together with the ambitions of the new states on Hungary's frontiers, presented the danger that the country would come under foreign occupation.

Therefore Mihály Károlyi and his delegation began negotiations in Belgrade with General Franchet d'Esperey, the Commander-in-Chief of the Entente Forces in the Balkans, who did not regard the provisions of the Padua agreement as valid for his sector of the front, and set new ones for the Hungarian delegation. After a few modifications, the new armistice was signed on 13 November. The demarcation line agreed to at Belgrade ran deep into the territory of historical Hungary in the south and the east, but did not affect the northern regions (Slovakia). Not long afterwards, however, the Allied Powers unilaterally amended the agreement: under the terms of the Bucharest Treaty of 1916, they authorized Rumania to continue her advance and also gave their consent to the occupation of Slovakia by Czechoslovak units. An armed conflict broke out between Rumanian and Yugoslav forces over the affiliation of certain southern territories (Bácska, Bánát), and the Allies were compelled to bring in French troops.

The negotiations in Belgrade and the consequent extension of occupation not only to the territories inhabited purely by other nationalities, but also to disputed areas, and even to entirely Hungarian inhabited regions, shook the government's internal political position. Mihály Károlyi's popularity stemmed not least of all from the fact that he had become known in the last years of the war as a man friendly to the Entente and a politician with Entente connections. Consequently wide sections of Hungarian society hoped that a government headed by him would ensure more advantageous terms and more favourable treatment for Hungary by the victorious Great Powers. These hopes did not materialize.

The attitude of the Entente disappointed Károlyi and his immediate associates, because the basis of their foreign policy was Wilsonism, that is, the programme embodied in the famous Fourteen Points. Károlyi and his government had wanted to build on them an independent and democratic Hungary. But by this time the leading politicians of the United States had also adopted a new attitude towards the Fourteen Points, while England and France regarded them already as outdated.

The members of the Károlyi government had to face the fact that despite their policy of sincere friendship towards the Entente, Hungary would be treated as a defeated country and the Great Powers would be influenced by their own interests and the commitments they had undertaken during the war. The primary sphere of interest of the United States and England was not the Danube basin, which was virtually left to France. Thus it often seemed to the government that Anglo-Saxon politicians showed more understanding for Hungary's

problems than did the French. The force of circumstances, however, still obliged the government of democratic Hungary to bear the consequences of the foreign, domestic and national minority policies of the Dual Monarchy.

One of the pillars of the government's policy for the national minorities and also of its foreign policy, was the plan conceived by Oszkár Jászi, as minister for nationalities, to establish an 'Eastern Switzerland'. The government condemned the policy of the Dual Monarchy towards the national minorities and wanted to replace it by a new form of coexistence based on autonomous rights. Jászi's earnest desire for an agreement with the minorities led to negotiations with the Rumanian and Slovak leaders. During the course of these discussions, it became clear that although the Hungarians were offering the prospect of far-reaching cultural and political rights, their efforts were still aimed at keeping together the territory of historical Hungary. By this time, however, the national minorities could no longer be satisfied with this solution, but wanted to unite with their mother countries: the Transylvanian Rumanians with Rumania, the Slovaks of Northern Hungary with the newly created Czechoslovak Republic, and the South Slavs with the Serb-Croat-Sloven state.

The government hoped to lessen its foreign political isolation through the discussions it began with Italian and Yugoslav political leaders. The members of the government hoped that Italy would side with Hungary at the peace conference; and by strengthening relations with the Yugoslavs, they hoped to reach agreement on certain disputed territories and on closer economic co-operation. They reasoned that Yugoslavia, since she enjoyed the support of France, would favourably influence the hostile French attitude to Hungary. Such a turn in the situation seemed all the more desirable as French policies had a decisive influence in Central Europe.

In November and December, the government took numerous important internal political measures. The new electoral law provided for a secret ballot, and granted the franchise to all men over 21 years of age with six years of Hungarian citizenship. Women also gained the vote, but with a somewhat more restricted franchise. This law guaranteed much more extensive rights than any similar earlier Hungarian law, and was worthy of note even by European standards. Freedom of the press, assembly and speech was guaranteed by law to such an extent that there were no restrictions even on the organization and propaganda of forces opposed to the bourgeois democratic system which were striving to restore the old order. The Ruthenian people living in the territory of Hungary were granted autonomy, and an

autonomous region was established for them. The eight-hour working day was introduced and the government also began preparing a land reform law.

But difficulties that seemed insoluble made their appearance in the economic life of the country, and particularly with regard to essential supplies. The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had a grave effect on the economy, which had already deteriorated disastrously during the four years of the war. Both in regard to imports and exports, Hungarian economic life had been closely geared to the imperial framework and requirements of the Dual Monarchy. The occupation of the country's southern, south-eastern and northern territories fragmented the economic unit which until then had functioned as an organic whole. Production in the plants and factories, owing to lack of raw materials and fuel, was largely at a standstill. As a result of the blockade and of the fragmented economic system, there were serious disturbances in the supplying of food, consumer goods, clothing and fuel.

Unemployment assumed tremendous proportions. By the middle of December 1918, some 1,200,000 demobilized soldiers and refugees, fleeing from the occupied territories, swelled the ranks of the destitute. The government was compelled to organize collection drives by decree in order to clothe the men returning from the battle fronts and prisoner-of-war camps. The refugees first swarmed into the capital, where they sought shelter in railway cars at the railway terminals, because homes could not be found for them. The unemployed and the demobilized soldiers were granted relief, but the recipients regarded the sums as inadequate, and demanded opportunities to work. The dissatisfaction of the destitute in the countryside was increased not only by the returning soldiers and former prisoners of war, but also by the fact that the new land reform law, awaited with such impatience, was slow in being drawn up. The big landowners did not have the autumn work on the land done, largely because it was not certain how the law in preparation would affect their rights of ownership. This led to further clashes between the landowners and the landless peasants.

The dissatisfaction of the people was made more acute by the attitude of a large number of civil servants in the state administrative apparatus, and of a considerable part of the officers' corps who were hostile to both the masses and the government. It was their opinion that the government was too compliant and lacking in energy, while the masses were too radical for them. They therefore carried out the government decrees slowly and unwillingly. This intensified the dissatisfaction, primarily in the provinces, where the councils of workers began to

demand executive rights and a voice in the administration of their affairs from the authorities. Within the army, on the initiative of the minister of defence himself, special units were formed which could, on occasion, be used against the masses, or even against the government. A number of the professional officers joined a counter-revolutionary organization that was headed by Gyula Gömbös, later a prime minister.

There were also conflicts within the government. Yielding to popular demand, the minister of defence, Albert Bartha, resigned, and one of Mihály Károlyi's oldest party followers, Count Tivadar Batthyány, who criticized the government and Károlyi's policy from the right, relinquished his post of minister of the interior.

### The Communist Party of Hungary Is Formed

The founding of the Communist Party of Hungary, in the latter part of November, had an exceptionally great influence on the development of internal political forces at this time, and on the whole course of later Hungarian history. The organizers of the party were young former Social Democratic Party members who during the war became prisoners of war in Russia and later participated in the Russian revolutions on the side of the Bolsheviks. The core of the party was already formed in Soviet Russia, as a part of the Russian Communist (Bolshevik) Party. They elected as their leader Béla Kun, who for a time had worked with Lenin and enjoyed great prestige. Returning to Budapest, Béla Kun and his associates began negotiations with members of the left-wing opposition of the Social Democratic Party, and with the Revolutionary Socialists who had formed their group during the war years. These groups had played an outstanding role in the victory of the bourgeois democratic revolution. Joining forces with the Left Social Democrats and with the Revolutionary Socialists, the returning Hungarian communists formed their new party, which soon began to publish its own newspaper, *Vörös Újság* (Red Journal).

With the establishment of the Communist Party of Hungary, the Social Democratic Party was no longer the only workers' party representing the interests of the working class; the polarization that had been going forward for many years within the working class was now given an organizational basis.

The Communist Party of Hungary began its organizing work in the factories of the capital and in the army, and then gradually extended it to the countryside. Its programme included the extension of the role and influence of the councils of workers and soldiers and of the

struggle against the right-wing leaders of the Social Democratic Party. It called for an end to co-operation with the bourgeoisie and the crushing of the counter-revolution, the replacement of a foreign policy seeking favour with the Entente for one based on an alliance with Soviet Russia. Its programme aimed ultimately at the overthrow of the bourgeois social system through the seizure of power by the workers' councils.

The growth of the party's popularity and influence meant not only that the mass dissatisfaction, voiced up to then chiefly in the workers' councils, was beginning to grow into the force of an organized and exceptionally active political party, but also that the influence and mass following of the Social Democratic Party was declining. This weakened the position of the government since its only party with a mass basis was the Social Democratic Party. Not one of the bourgeois parties participating in the government enjoyed a mass following.

At one of the mass meetings held in the capital by the Communist Party of Hungary in the second half of December, the demand for the establishment of the power of the councils was made. One after the other the revolutionary organizations of the provincial towns (the councils of workers, soldiers and peasants) announced their adherence to the programme of the Communist Party of Hungary.

### Government Crisis in January

In the new year of 1919, radical mass actions increased in number and scope. Early in January, a strike broke out at one of the country's largest coal mines, in the course of which the miners took possession of the pits, the administrative buildings, the post and telegraph offices and the railway. The government crushed the action with armed force, and since the Social Democratic Party lent the government its support, the workers' confidence in the party decreased to a great extent. At the same time factories were being taken over in the capital and in the provincial industrial centres by the councils of workers who removed the owners of the factories or the managers, and began to run the enterprises themselves.

As the consequence of all these events the bourgeois democratic government was faced with a grave crisis in January. A part of the leadership of the Social Democratic Party, in order to retain the prestige and influence of the party, recommended that the Social Democratic ministers withdraw from the government. The bourgeois ministers who saw that, if left to themselves, they would be incapable of

surmounting the difficulties of the situation, rejected this solution. There was also a line of Social Democratic reasoning that hoped to put an end to both mass actions and the growth of Communist influence by strengthening the position of the Social Democratic Party within the government.

After several days of discussions, the latter standpoint finally prevailed. On 11 January, the National Council proclaimed Mihály Károlyi President of the Republic, and he called on Dénes Berinkey, until then the Minister of Justice, to form a government. The Ministries of Education, Public Welfare, Trade and Defence in the new government were given to Social Democrats (Zsigmond Kunfi, Gyula Peidl, Ernő Garami and Vilmos Böhm). An influential representative of the small and medium peasantry (István Nagyatádi Szabó) was also drawn into the government, somewhat as a gesture of appeasement to the village population who were expecting to receive land.

At the time of the government crisis, there were visits by two missions of the Entente Powers, in actual fact of the United States. Members of the government attached great hopes to both the economic mission headed by A. E. Taylor and the political mission under A. C. Coolidge, and for this very reason the government through its representatives made contact with them even before they reached Budapest. It was hoped that as a consequence of direct negotiations with the representatives of the Entente, Hungary would be included among the beneficiaries of the American Relief Administration which, under the direction of Herbert Hoover, had been extended to Central and Eastern Europe. They were also confident that the attitude of the Allied Powers towards Hungary would soften, and they would support the government in its difficult foreign and domestic situation.

The heads of the two missions did in fact make recommendations for lifting the blockade, coupled with economic aid and political support for the country, primarily in order to consolidate the position of Károlyi and the bourgeois democratic regime. These recommendations were given a good chance of acceptance, for the Great Powers at the Paris Conference regarded the disarming of revolutionary aspirations in countries neighbouring on Soviet Russia as their paramount task. Ultimately none of the recommendations made by the missions were realized, although a member of Hoover's staff, Captain T. T. C. Gregory of the United States, made efforts to send food and coal supplies to Hungary.

During the negotiations in Budapest, the desire was voiced by the representatives of the Allies that the government should try to reduce

Communist influence. The same aims were stressed by Major Smith of Britain who arrived in Budapest to join the negotiations, and even more so by Col. Sir Thomas Cuninghame, the head of the British Military Mission in Vienna, who had talks with the Hungarian government a few days later. To provide better information for the Peace Conference, the mission headed by Coolidge left one of its members behind in Budapest.

### Measures to Promote Consolidation

The new government wished to promote the consolidation of the regime in a double sense, by acting equally against the left and the right wing. This programme was also supported by the extraordinary congress of the Social Democratic Party.

At the end of January, the Budapest Workers' Council, on the recommendation of the Social Democrats, expelled the Communists from its membership and from membership of the trade unions, and condemned the activities of the Communist Party. A few days later, upon the orders of the minister of interior, a search was made of the premises of the party, the editorial offices and the printing press of *Vörös Újság*. Documents were seized and the premises were wrecked. A decree prescribing the formation of shop committees in all factories with more than 25 workers, and ensuring these bodies the right of participation in directing the affairs of the factory, was aimed at curtailing the authority of the workers' councils that had come into existence spontaneously during the revolution.

The government felt compelled to take measures also against the right wing, since the conservative opposition had renewed its fight against it. Mihály Károlyi's brother, Count József Károlyi, despite a ban by the government, convened a meeting at one of the county seats where those present unequivocally demanded the restoration of the old regime. Similar meetings were held in other counties as well. Count István Bethlen, later prime minister, at this time organized a party made up of conservative, counter-revolutionary forces, the core of his government party of later years.

The masses supporting the workers' councils anticipated the government in responding to these moves. At the county seat where József Károlyi had held his counter-revolutionary meeting only two days before, they occupied the town hall, dismissed the administrative officials, and handed over the administration of the county to their trusted representatives, the members of the so-called 'directory'.



Workers also dispersed several counter-revolutionary, nationalist and anti-semitic demonstrations staged in the capital.

In order to clean up the provincial administrative apparatus and to increase its own influence, the government dismissed the lord lieutenants of the old regime who were still in office, and appointed in their place government commissioners. Orders were issued for the election of people's councils in place of the county commissions, which were dissolved.

The laws enacted for the defence of the republic, which provided for the internment of persons who were a threat to the regime, were meant as constitutional weapons usable equally against the left and the right-wing opposition. On the basis of these laws two former ministers and a Roman Catholic bishop were interned in a nobleman's mansion in the country, and the activities of the counter-revolutionary organization of officers, headed by Gyula Gömbös, were banned.

The real disarming of mass dissatisfaction, however, was expected from the land reform law made public on 16 February. According to the law all estates in excess of 500 *hold* (in certain instances, in excess of 200 *hold*) were to be expropriated, for which the owners would be paid compensation. The government wished to establish primarily small peasant farms, but also made it possible to form co-operative land holdings. The arbitrary occupation of land was strictly forbidden.

### Mass Actions to Advance the Revolution

The liquidation of the system of large landed estates, which hindered the country's development and democratization not only in the economic but also in the social-political sense, was an event of historic significance in Hungary. Indeed, it was a measure without which the democratic transformation of the country would have been impossible.

However, the law proved to be a failure. The keyed-up expectations of the people were not satisfied either by the limits set on the landed properties, which the landless wanted to reduce, nor the compensation, which they were unwilling to pay. Even less popular was the provision of the law that the distribution of the land was to be preceded by prolonged and cumbersome preparations (a request for land had first to be submitted, which was then considered; the land adjustment council had to be elected, and then sent out to the lands; the land had to be surveyed and divided, etc.). The law was passed eventually in early spring, so agricultural work made the rapid and immediate

distribution of land impossible. Thus the law was already belated and antiquated in every respect.

Mihály Károlyi began personally to distribute the lands of his own vast estate at Kálkápólna a few days after the law was published. But in other regions the land distribution committees did their work slowly and sluggishly, and in reality only a small amount of land was distributed. The impatient landless masses at first deluged the government with urgent demands, but soon in various parts of the country they began to occupy the large estates arbitrarily and to farm them collectively for the time being. This solution was supported by both the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party—each for different reasons. The council of ministers was compelled to conclude that the law was unsatisfactory and that the government was incapable of enforcing it.

A mass meeting of unemployed took place on 20 February in Budapest in a tense atmosphere. Its participants staged a demonstration in front of the editorial offices of *Népszava*, the daily paper of the Social Democratic Party. In the course of the demonstration there was a clash with the police in which shots were fired, injuring a number of people and mortally wounding several policemen.

### Arrest of the Communist Leaders

This demonstration decided the prolonged debate within the government on whether the Communist leaders should be arrested or not. For weeks the Social Democratic ministers had recoiled from taking this step and they had rejected several recommendations for their arrest put forward by the Minister of the Interior and the Police Commissioner. But following the demonstration the proposal was raised once again, and with such firmness that this time they gave their consent. Therefore, on the following day, some fifty Communist leaders were taken into custody. At first the Social Democratic Party was able to create an atmosphere that supported the arrests, but this changed rapidly. The workers of the iron and steel industry, and those in other trades, young left-wing intellectuals, members of the Galileo Circle, and others, demanded that the Communist leaders be set free.

The activities of the Communist Party were not paralysed by the arrest of its leaders. And when the arrested Communists were declared political prisoners after the personal intervention of Károlyi, they were permitted to receive visitors, and were able to continue directing the movement from prison.

The consolidation of the government's position actually suffered a setback. From the beginning of March, the arbitrary occupation and collective possession of the large estates took on nation-wide proportions. In numerous places this was accompanied by refusals to allow the appointed commissioners by the government to take up their offices. Instead, the workers and landless peasants seated their own representatives, the directories, at the head of the town and county administrations. In the organizing of these provincial mass movements left-wing Social Democratic leaders like Jenő Hamburger and Sándor Latinka played outstanding roles.

The government was helpless in the face of these mass actions; it acknowledged the seizure of power by the directories, consented to the appointment of several county commissioners and cancelled its own earlier appointments. Even the personal appearance of the Minister of Economic Affairs could not prevent the arbitrary seizure of land and administrative power in the county with which his own political career had been linked, and where he had once enjoyed the greatest influence and prestige. An indication of the mood of the people and the situation throughout the country was the fact that in the town of Szeged, occupied by French units of the Allied Armed Forces in the Balkans, the town's administration was also taken over by the workers' directory.

Under such conditions, the Communist Party of Hungary called a mass meeting for 23 March for the release of the Communist leaders from prison, by force if need be. This meeting, however, was not to take place.

### **The Vyx Note and Its Aftermath**

On 20 March, the Budapest representative of the Allied Powers, the French Lieutenant-Colonel Vyx, handed Mihály Károlyi a note from the Peace Conference. The note called for the setting up of a neutral zone in the south-eastern territories of the country, separating from each other the Hungarian and Rumanian military units positioned along the demarcation line. Accordingly, areas which the Allied Forces wished to occupy, inhabited entirely by Hungarians, had to be evacuated. The establishment of this neutral zone figured on the agenda of the Peace Conference already at the end of February, when Marshal Foch proposed the plan for the mobilization of large forces for his anti-Soviet campaign. He had designated an important role for Rumania in the campaign, and wanted to make her secure against

a possible, though hardly expected, attack by Hungary. This was the purpose of establishing the neutral zone. Although the Peace Conference rejected the whole of Marshal Foch's plan, it did approve the section regarding Hungary.

There was not a single Hungarian politician willing to fulfil this demand of the Great Powers. But the government shrank from the risk of an open rejection, not only because of considerations of foreign policy, but also because of the internal political situation. The fruitless efforts to consolidate the regime, the attitude of the Allied Powers, and the Vyx Note made the failure of the government both at home and abroad complete.

Mihály Károlyi proposed that a government made up of Social Democratic ministers take power. But the Social Democratic Party refused to agree, especially since it had been conducting negotiations for days with the imprisoned Communist leaders in the hope of formulating some kind of agreement and co-operation. The new situation gave these negotiations new importance and resulted in their rapid conclusion. The two workers' parties signed an agreement for their fusion, and for the formation of a joint government; the Social Democratic leaders declared that they accepted the programme of the Communists.

In the note replying to the Entente, Mihály Károlyi declared that the demands of the Allies were unacceptable, and he announced the resignation of the Berinkey government.

## 2. THE HUNGARIAN SOVIET REPUBLIC

### **The Dictatorship of the Proletariat Proclaimed**

On 21 March 1919, a new government, called the Revolutionary Governing Council, was formed. Its members were Communists and Social Democrats, among whom the various ministerial portfolios were distributed in equal proportions (the new ministries were known as commissariats). Béla Kun became the head of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. Although the chairman of the new government was Sándor Garbai, who belonged to the centralist fraction of the Social Democrats, in actual fact Béla Kun directed all its activities, and without him not a single important internal or foreign policy decision was made.

On 22 March, the Governing Council and the United Workers' Party issued an appeal and a brief summary of the programme of the new government. The appeal stressed that the country's domestic political difficulties could only be solved by a socialist government. And it designated, as the basis of the country's foreign policy, a break with the bourgeois democratic regime's orientation towards the Entente, and an alliance with Soviet Russia. In a message to the national minorities living on the territory of Hungary and to the peoples of the neighbouring countries, it declared the government's support for broad co-operation on an international scale based on equal rights and mutual respect. Both this appeal and Béla Kun's statements repeatedly and emphatically pointed out that the new system, the Soviet Republic, wished to live in peace with all peoples, including the Great Powers.

The formation and the programme of the Governing Council were welcomed with enthusiasm throughout the country. The seizure of power had been carried out peacefully. Those workers and agrarian proletarians who, during the months of the bourgeois democratic regime, had expressed their dissatisfaction with the regime by occupying factories and landed estates and rallying behind the Communist Party and the workers' councils, now greeted the changes as the culmination of their own efforts. But no opposition or protest was made even by those sections of society which did not agree with the internal

political programme of socialist transformation. These sections of the population accepted the proclamation of the Soviet Republic as the rejection of the demands of the Great Powers, the rejection of the Vyx Note.

The political change in Hungary evoked a wide response in a Europe seething with social dissatisfaction, national grievances and dissension between the victors and the defeated. Soviet Russia, with whom the new Hungarian government had immediately established telegraphic contact, welcomed the proclamation of the Soviet Republic. Messages of greeting also arrived from workers' organizations in Austria, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Holland and Italy. It seemed that the oppressive post-war isolation, resulting from the policy of the Great Powers, was now lessening and Hungary would now be able to establish contact with the world around her.

All this appeared to confirm the widely held belief that the proletarian revolution would not remain an isolated phenomenon in Central Europe. It would bring into existence a new form of state not only in Hungary, but also in Austria, Germany and then in the countries of Western Europe. A soviet republic was soon proclaimed in Bavaria, and this seemed the next step in the proletarian revolution.

### **Political, Economic and Cultural Measures**

On the first day of office, the new government began the realization of its programme. It declared a state of martial law and banned the sale of alcoholic beverages in order to avert any kind of disturbances. It began to reorganize the army, which was renamed the Red Army. It wished to make up the new army primarily by recruiting organized workers, but it also kept on from the old army all those who were willing to continue serving in the armed forces under the new social system. In order to create a new corps of officers as soon as possible, a course of study for commanders was organized. Political commissars were assigned to the army corps and individual detachments. Their task was to build up a new spirit and a unified political outlook in the army. They were to work alongside the commanders who were mainly officers of the old regime. The police and the gendarmerie were also reorganized, and became the united Red Guard. This organization was under the control of Communists, but its personnel, both enlisted men and officers, consisted largely of former members of the old organizations.

The system of justice was also reorganized. Revolutionary tribunals

were set up in place of the courts. Their membership comprised not only trained legal experts, but also laymen, workers found worthy of the task. The lay members of the tribunals also participated in deciding the verdict.

In March, industrial, mining and transport enterprises employing more than twenty workers were nationalized. Production commissars were appointed to head the enterprises, and workers' councils were elected to assist them. Their task was to supervise the process of production and to see that work discipline was observed. About 100,000 people worked in the nationalized enterprises. The financial institutions also became public property; bank deposits were impounded and their use was restricted. Tenement houses were placed under public ownership and rents were adjusted and reduced, putting an end to rent usury, which had long plagued low-income families. Some large apartments and flats with many rooms were requisitioned. The lessee was left the use of only one or two rooms, and the rest were given to families of workers with many children living in slums or crowded unhealthy tenements on the fringes of the city.

The working day was fixed at eight hours. Wages of workers were increased and equal pay was given to women under equal working conditions. A whole series of regulations provided for the protection of children and the improvement of the position of industrial apprentices, ensuring them better facilities for learning a trade.

The Governing Council endeavoured to alleviate the very serious shortages. It ordered the nationalization of wholesale enterprises and with the help of the trade unions reorganized the distribution of goods, even introducing the rationing of certain items. Anyone who worked and was a member of some trade union could obtain the necessary foodstuffs and consumer goods, despite the shortage of stocks.

The Governing Council also settled the land question. Its decree on land provided for the nationalization of all medium-sized and large estates without compensation. The decree prohibited the redistribution of the lands, and provided for the introduction of collective farming on the properties taken into state ownership. Commissars of production were appointed to head the agricultural co-operatives that were formed in this manner. Since the new state did not have the necessary number of skilled men, these experts were appointed overwhelmingly from among the former owners, or the stewards who had previously managed the large estates. For the supervision of the work of the commissars of production and of the entire co-operative, councils were formed from among the agricultural labourers who had pre-

viously worked on the estates, and now became workers of the new co-operative farms.

The spontaneous movement for land seizures that had arisen at the time of the bourgeois democratic regime had influenced the settlement of the land question in this manner. But it was also influenced by the Governing Council's view that the large estates left as undivided units would be much more suitable for highly productive farming and for meeting requirements in foodstuffs, than would the small peasant farms with scattered land and no machines or other modern equipment.

Nevertheless, the fact that the new land law did not make it possible for the landless to receive land, evoked dissatisfaction in the countryside. Consequently, within a few days it was made possible, on the basis of a confidential decree, to distribute land to a limited extent where dissatisfaction was great.

Later the Governing Council also expropriated the landed estates of the Churches, leaving in their possession only enough land for the support of the practising clergy. At the same time, the freedom of religious conscience and religious practice was guaranteed.

The Governing Council took into state ownership all primary and secondary schools. Prior to March 1919, about 80 per cent of the elementary schools and approximately 65 per cent of the secondary schools were under church ownership. Together with the nationalization order, plans for a uniform, compulsory eight-grade school were drawn up. Instructions were issued for the writing of new textbooks and the working out of a new curriculum. Preparations for a reform in university education were begun. The state was willing to continue employing the teaching priests, friars and nuns, if they left their orders and entered the service of the state.

Since a considerable section of the population (particularly the destitute in the countryside and certain sections of the working class) was illiterate, the Commissariat of Public Education organized courses for the teaching of reading and writing, the direction of which was undertaken with sincere enthusiasm by teachers and intellectuals.

As a consequence of the reorganization of the cultural and scientific life of the country, the progressive representatives of letters, sciences and the arts, who from the turn of the century had fought against the political and social backwardness of Hungary under the Dual Monarchy, to become the founders of modern Hungarian literature, art and science, now assumed a leading role. Béla Bartók, Ernő Dohnányi and Zoltán Kodály carried on their activities in the Directory of Music. Béla Bartók completed his ballet, *The Miraculous Mandarin*,

in the summer of 1919, and the Opera House planned to give its first performance in January 1920. György Lukács, the aesthetician and philosopher, was one of the leaders of the Commissariat of Public Education, and at the same time the chairman of the Directory of Writers. In the work of that latter the film critic Béla Balázs, and such writers and poets as Zsigmond Móricz, Mihály Babits, Gyula Krúdy, Árpád Tóth and Gyula Juhász took an active part. Jenő Varga, the political economist, carried on not only theoretical work, but also had a practical role as one of the people's commissars. Elemér Vadász, the geologist, became a university professor in 1919, and Károly Mannheim, the sociologist who later made his home in Germany and Britain, also took an active part in the scientific life.

Autonomous territories were set up for the two most important national minorities living in the territory of Hungary at that time, the Ruthenians and the Germans. All nationalities were guaranteed the same rights as Hungarians.

#### **General Smuts's Mission to Budapest**

Although the Revolutionary Governing Council endeavoured to establish peaceful relations with every country, only the government of neighbouring Austria maintained diplomatic relations with Hungary just as it had with the bourgeois democratic regime. The Governing Council was unable to establish direct contact with its ally, Soviet Russia, since the conditions of the civil war then going on in Russia made this impossible. Only the telegraph ensured contact between the two countries.

Béla Kun's note of 24 March to the Peace Conference was intended to bring about a further lessening of the country's isolation, and to clarify relations with the Great Powers. This note stressed the Revolutionary Council's peaceful intentions towards every country, and asked the Peace Conference to send a diplomatic mission to Hungary for the opening of direct negotiations. Up to that time no new decision had been arrived at in Paris regarding the Vyx Note, which had also stated that in the event of rejection, the Allies would take suitable counter-measures. Béla Kun's note was intended to anticipate and parry any such measures.

When the note was placed on the agenda of the Peace Conference, sharp controversies were already raging there over the events in Hungary and their connection with the proposed intervention against Soviet Russia. The Anglo-Saxon politicians, President Wilson and

Prime Minister Lloyd George, blamed primarily the aspirations of the French military leaders, Marshal Foch and his circle, for what had happened in Hungary. It was their opinion that the establishment of the Soviet Republic was exclusively due to a violation of the nation's interests, and a protest against the unjustly exaggerated French demands. Wilson, Lloyd George and Clemenceau were equally and most deeply concerned that a soviet type of power had come into existence in Central Europe, and they feared the possibility of a similar political development in Austria, Germany and elsewhere.

At the time when a reply was being formulated to Béla Kun's note, the policy of the Peace Conference with regard to Soviet Russia was also undergoing a change. The Great Powers decided to withdraw their own troops from the intervention and the civil war, while continuing to support the struggle to overthrow the Soviet government with other means, such as money, equipment and advice.

As a result of events in Hungary, they felt that much greater attention would have to be given to the European situation, primarily to the countries bordering on Soviet Russia, in order to prevent similar changes occurring in them. This was why the 'cordon sanitaire' principle, worked out earlier by Clemenceau, was put into effect.

As a consequence of this change in policy it was decided to withdraw the French troops from the Russian city of Odessa. The weapons and equipment used in Russia were not to be handed over to General Denikin, but to Rumania, so that she could strengthen her defences against Hungary. By this time, Czechoslovak and Rumanian statesmen had already offered help to crush the Soviet Republic by armed force. In Rumania preparatory military measures had already been taken in Transylvania.

However, open military intervention was for the time being not regarded as feasible, particularly by the Anglo-Saxon experts. Those who especially opposed the intervention included Philip N. Brown, an American professor left behind by the Coolidge mission in Budapest, Admiral Sir Edward Troubridge, the British president of the Allied Danube Committee, General Tasker H. Bliss of the United States, and most other members of the American delegation at the Paris Peace Conference.

In the leading councils of the Peace Conference this standpoint finally won the day against French opposition, and after a debate that lasted for days, it was decided to send the South African General Smuts to Budapest. As a result, the launching of the Czechoslovak and Rumanian military attack, organized by the French Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces in the Balkans, had to be postponed.



At the discussions in Budapest, Field Marshal Smuts insisted on setting up the neutral zone, but he was ready to draw boundaries more favourable to Hungary than before. He welcomed Béla Kun's proposal for the convening of an international conference to discuss the problem of the Danube Basin. But he did not guarantee that, if the Soviet Republic accepted the plan of a neutral zone, the proposal put forward by Béla Kun would really be carried out. Thus the negotiations ended without results, although neither party believed that they were final. In Entente political circles Smuts's mission was seen as a success for the Soviet Republic, for Mihály Károlyi had not been able to persuade the Peace Conference to send such a mission.

### Election of Councils

Elections were held throughout Hungary on 7 April. The Soviet Republic, making use of the experiences of Soviet Russia and the councils that had sprung up earlier in Hungary, entrusted the exercise of power to elected councils in place of the old apparatus of public administration. The Provisional Constitution extended the franchise even further than had been done by the bourgeois democratic regime. It gave the vote to all men and women over the age of 18, and abolished all such qualifications as property, education and citizenship. The election took place on the basis of a single list, whether it was the election of members of village, town or county councils, or deputies to the highest organ of state power, the National Assembly of Councils. In this way the election was at the same time a referendum. Polling took place amidst ceremony and great enthusiasm everywhere, and the voters assured the Governing Council of their confidence. It was regarded as significant that in one of the important southern towns of the country, Szeged, which was occupied by French troops, the election also yielded victory for the Soviet Republic.

By this time, however, only a few days separated Hungary from military intervention. On 10 April, the Rumanian Royal Council adopted a decision to launch a military attack on the Republic, and Czechoslovak units were also deployed for an assault. General Franchet d'Esperey attempted to draw Yugoslavia into the military campaign, but he did not succeed.

### Armed Attack against the Soviet Republic

On 16 April, with the support of the French military leaders and the tacit approval of the rest of the Great Powers, the Rumanian royal troops crossed the demarcation line. The numerically superior Rumanian forces, coming from the south-east, were able to advance successfully because the Red Army was still in the process of being organized and was incapable of putting up any substantial resistance. In numerous towns, at the news of the approach of the Rumanian troops, or upon their appearance, the workers' councils were dismissed and the local administration was taken over by the members of the old state apparatus.

The Revolutionary Governing Council reacted with firm measures. It began to recruit men of military age, set up the Eastern Army High Command with Vilmos Böhm in charge, and appointed Aurél Stromfeld as chief of staff. A commission presided over by Tibor Szamuely was charged with maintaining order in the areas behind the battle fronts. Large masses of factory workers and students volunteered for service in the army.

But the situation at the front grew catastrophic when the commander of the so-called 'Transylvanian Division', which formed the core of the defence, came to terms with the Rumanian High Command and surrendered. The Red Army was compelled to withdraw to the line of the Tisza river. On the following day, the attack of the Czechoslovak units from the north also began, and they met with the Rumanian forces in the north-east. Thus they practically enclosed the Red Army in a pincer movement.

All these events prompted the Revolutionary Governing Council, and Béla Kun himself, to endeavour to stop the intervention by diplomatic means. He began talks with Philip M. Brown, an American diplomatic agent in Budapest. He appealed to President Wilson as well as to the governments of the neighbouring countries. He stressed that the Governing Council had never had any aggressive intentions, did not support the idea of territorial integrity, and therefore had no territorial claims on the neighbouring countries. In his appeals Kun called for the restoration of peace as early as possible.

### Crisis in May

While May Day parades and celebrations were being held throughout the country on 1 May, now declared an official holiday, the Governing Council debated the serious situation at an emergency session. Some of the Social Democratic commissars were in favour of accepting the proposal of Philip M. Brown that the Governing Council should resign and allow some kind of provisional government to take its place. In return, the Czechoslovak and Rumanian invasions would stop. But the meeting of the Budapest Workers' Council, which was consulted by the Governing Council, decided not to accept the proposal put forward by Brown. It called on the Governing Council to stay in office and continue the defence of the country. A temporary easing of the crisis was brought about through the appeal of the Peace Conference and the firm attitude of the Soviet government in Moscow, which induced the Rumanian troops to halt at the line of the Tisza.

As a consequence of the intervention and the critical situation, those political groups and sections of the population, which opposed the new social order, increased their organizing activities. In Vienna a so-called 'Viennese Counter-Revolutionary Committee', headed by Count István Bethlen, was formed. It was made up of emigré aristocrats, high-ranking public officials, army officers and bourgeois politicians. The committee established contact with representatives of the Entente in Vienna, as well as with counter-revolutionary groups in Western Hungary. They endeavoured by every means at their disposal to hasten the resignation of the Governing Council. They obtained the money for their organizing activities by breaking into the building of the Hungarian legation in Vienna on May Day and stealing considerable amounts of Hungarian money. They passed some of this on to the counter-revolutionaries organizing in Szeged.

At Szeged, using the favourable conditions offered by the presence of French troops, an anti-Bolshevik Committee was set up which included bourgeois politicians, civil servants and a few aristocrats. Out of this group grew the successive counter-revolutionary government, which also began organizing a so-called 'national army', led by Miklós Horthy, with the collaboration of Gyula Gömbös.

Throughout the country, but particularly in the countryside, as a consequence of the May crisis, the enemies of the regime spread the rumour that the government had resigned. This resulted, in some places, in the outbreak of counter-revolutionary uprisings. A group of Hungarian counter-revolutionaries who at that time lived in the

Austrian capital went so far as to commit armed intrusions against the territory of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, with the knowledge and actual support of the British Mission in Vienna. However, all these hostile actions were put down with local forces within a short time.

### The Red Army's Successful Counter-Attack

In the first half of May, the reorganization of the Red Army was begun. At recruiting rallies industrial workers and students volunteered in great masses. By the middle of the month, the number of men in the army had doubled. A large number of the old officers also volunteered for duty. Within the Red Army an independent, so-called 'International Regiment' was formed of those non-Hungarian volunteers who had offered their services out of solidarity with the Hungarian cause. Aurél Stromfeld became the chief of staff of the whole army. Thanks to his great military skill and popularity with the army, the reorganization proceeded rapidly and by the middle of May, the Red Army was able to mount a counter-offensive towards the north against the Czechoslovak forces, which were numerically weaker than the Rumanians and whose morale was not so strong. The northern campaign of the Red Army was successful from the very beginning.

The strength of the army was undoubtedly increased by the fact that the defence of the revolution and the homeland had merged into a single cause. Moreover, as the Red Army advanced into Slovak-populated territories it was greeted with sympathy by the revolutionary-minded masses. Discipline was also deteriorating among the Czechoslovak units and some of them did not want to fight against the Hungarian Soviet Republic. At the beginning of June, the Red Army succeeded in forcing a wedge between the Czechoslovak and Rumanian troops in the north-east. The military leaders were counting on establishing direct contact with the Soviet Red Army as the result of their advance towards the north-east. This would have considerably improved the military and political position of the Hungarian Soviet Republic.

The military successes inspired confidence throughout the country; in Szeged a political strike lasting several weeks was begun. The strikers demanded that the counter-revolutionary government which had been formed there should resign, and that contact should be established with Budapest. However, the atmosphere was by no means undisturbed.

The economic situation remained severe because of the Allies' economic blockade against Hungary, decided upon in Paris on 28 March. There was not enough fuel and raw materials, and there was a shortage of industrial goods and food. To improve the supply of Vienna, the provisioning commission of the Allies, under American direction, tolerated the exchange of goods at the Austro-Hungarian border, but Hungary's shortages remained acute. The well-to-do peasants with a surplus of food refused to take their goods to the market. This not only increased shortages, but also aroused the indignation of the townspeople. Relations between town and countryside grew strained, and the dissatisfaction only weakened the prestige and influence of the government.

In order to make best use of all available resources, the Governing Council set up local and district production councils, organized the factories into centres of trade and took strict measures to see that the farmers' cooperatives and the peasant farmers carried on the necessary agricultural work. To ensure the unified organization and management of the country's whole economic life, it established the National Economic Council. It also ordered the drafting of horses into the army, and supplemented the earlier method of food collecting, or in some places supplanted it, with requisitioning and confiscation. At the same time, a number of politicians endangering the security of the country were temporarily taken into custody.

Early in June, the Viennese Counter-Revolutionary Committee precipitated a railway strike and an armed uprising covering several counties. Its aim was to disrupt the railway supply communications of the Red Army, and at the same time by seizing a piece of territory under the authority of the Government Council to get a foothold in Hungary and establish itself as an alternative government competent to negotiate with the Entente. The local forces could not crush the revolt without being strengthened with armed units from other parts of the country. The leading echelons of the counter-revolutionary uprising were composed of army and gendarmerie officers, and they recruited their following from among wealthy peasants, dismissed civil servants and former shopkeepers. Even members of the clergy were to be found in their ranks.

At the same time, the commanders of the Czechoslovak army and the Czechoslovak government were urging the immediate and effective intervention of the Peace Conference against the successfully advancing Red Army. They pointed out that if they did not receive reinforcements they would have to reckon with revolutionary uprisings in both Slovakia and Bohemia.

Between the Anglo-Saxon and French political leaders on the one hand, and the diplomats and military leaders on the other, there was once again sharp disagreement as to the best course of action. It was part of the controversy which had been going on with increasing vehemence since the first days of the year regarding their future policy towards Soviet Russia and Hungary. The proposal of the military leaders that the Great Powers should use their own armed forces against Hungary was rejected by the political leaders. The initiative was now in the hands of Clemenceau, who wished to replace armed intervention by diplomacy. He relied on the support of Wilson and Lloyd George.

#### *Note from the Peace Conference*

A telegram was therefore dispatched to the Governing Council on 7 June, in the name of the Peace Conference. It called on the government to halt its advance, and held out the prospect of an invitation for its representative to go to Paris for negotiations. Although the Governing Council was not averse to entering into negotiations, in its reply to the Peace Conference it made it clear that the conditions were unacceptable. The Red Army continued its advance.

A debate over political methods dominated the congress of the United Workers' Party on 12 and 13 June. The differences between the Communists and Social Democrats, which the merger of their parties only postponed but did not resolve, became increasingly apparent amidst the foreign and domestic political difficulties of the Soviet Republic and led to violent debates and clashes of opinion during the discussions of the congress. One group of the Social Democratic leaders condemned the government's radical measures and demanded that they be moderated; they also attempted to exclude the Communists from the newly elected party executive body. But owing to the firm opposition of the Communists and the left-wing Social Democrats this effort was not successful.

A new note from the Peace Conference arrived on 13 June. This note contained a promise that if the Red Army stopped its advance and withdrew its units to their original positions, the Rumanian troops would hand over the territories they had occupied east of the Tisza river. The Governing Council and the party's executive body, weighing the offer, and considering especially the possibilities of retrieving the area beyond the Tisza which was rich in food, accepted the conditions of the Peace Conference in a note sent the same day.

### The National Congress of Councils

On 14 June, the National Congress of Councils elected in April convened. Austrian, Russian, German and Czechoslovak guests also participated in the Congress and assured the Soviet Republic of their solidarity.

The agenda included an analysis of the economic, military and foreign policy situation, on which Jenő Varga, Vilmos Böhm, Jenő Hamburger, Béla Kun and others reported. The Congress adopted the Constitution of the Soviet Republic, elected a Central Executive Committee with the task of supervising the work of the Governing Council between national congresses of the councils, and discussed a draft worked out for the organization and functioning of farming cooperatives.

Béla Kun informed the Congress of the latest note from the Peace Conference and of the Hungarian reply. This became the most important issue of the Congress and evoked the most heated controversies. Numerous speakers expressed their concern over whether the Hungarian working class had the right to stop fighting when Soviet Russia was still waging its own battle for existence. Others were worried about whether the Peace Conference would keep its promise; would it hand back the area east of the Tisza, since it gave no guarantees whatever in this respect?

Their anxieties were increased by the fact that, as an outcome of the withdrawal, the Slovak Soviet Republic would have to be left to itself, exposed to the danger of imminent collapse. This republic had come into existence by decision of the local workers on 16 June, as the consequence of the successful advance of the Red Army.

Finally, the National Congress of Councils endorsed the foreign policy of the Governing Council, as well as the reply sent to the Peace Conference. The order was issued for the withdrawal of the army from the northern regions.

### The Coup of 24 June

The discussions of the Congress were still in progress when an armed counter-revolutionary uprising broke out at the instigation of the Szeged government, in the region between the Danube and the Tisza rivers. This was part of an extensive plan embracing all the counter-revolutionary groups in Hungary. The plan was aimed at extending the uprising begun in the provinces to an armed rebellion in Budapest

which would force the Governing Council to resign. In Budapest the uprising broke out on 24 June, and involved the units of the Danube flotilla, members of the old military academy and the troops of one of the barracks. The rebels had counted on being joined by the workers of the Budapest factories, but this did not happen, and within a few hours detachments of the Red Guard crushed the revolt and restored order. This series of counter-revolutionary actions, which was the most extensive during the existence of the Soviet Republic, was also the last of its kind. Its fruitlessness convinced the leaders of the counter-revolutionary groups that without foreign aid they would be unable to force the Governing Council to resign.

The military evacuation of the northern regions resulted in a deterioration of morale both within the army and among the population. Following the withdrawal, Vilmos Böhm relinquished the leadership of the army to Jenő Landler, and Aurél Stromfeld, the chief of the General Staff, also resigned to be succeeded by Ferenc Julier. A number of the soldiers did not go to their new stations, but went home. Many army officers, who had previously supported the Governing Council, now turned against it, even if they did not all desert their posts.

The general situation and the public mood were worsened by the news that, on 2 July, Rumania had officially informed the Peace Conference that it refused to withdraw from the region east of the Tisza unless the Red Army was disarmed. The messages of the Governing Council to Paris urging fulfilment of the obligations undertaken in the Clemenceau note were fruitless. By then Rumania could count on not only the friendly disposition of the French but also on a new British policy. Represented largely by Foreign Secretary Balfour, it took into consideration Britain's economic interests in the large oil fields of Rumania. Balfour's views were now coming to carry greater weight than those of Lloyd George.

Those trade union and Social Democratic leaders who had earlier criticized the Soviet Republic, now spread the view among the workers that negotiations and an agreement with the Peace Conference, and a way out of the hopeless situation, were only possible through the removal of the Communists from the government.

The Governing Council attempted to clarify and resolve the situation in two ways. First, it sent Vilmos Böhm to Vienna to sound out the diplomats of the Entente regarding their further plans. A few days later he was joined there by several other Social Democratic politicians. Secondly, it approved the plans of Jenő Landler and Ferenc Julier for an offensive against the Rumanian troops stationed

east of the Tisza, so that the Red Army could occupy the area promised the Governing Council by the Peace Conference. The Tisza offensive was launched on 20 July, despite the fact that the army was not fully prepared and the morale of the troops was low. Moreover, the hinterland was not suitable for a successful military operation and a section of the officers corps was deliberately obstructing the campaign.

21 July was awaited with great expectations in Hungary: a general strike of the workers of Europe was called for that day as a protest against the interventionist wars against Soviet Russia and the Hungarian Soviet Republic. As a result of the high hopes, the disappointment was all the greater when it was found that although in numerous countries the workers demonstrated their solidarity, in Western Europe and particularly in the leading Entente countries the strike proved ineffectual.

A few days later the advance of the Red Army was halted by the counter-offensive of the well-organized and powerful Rumanian royal army. While some units attempted to resist, the Red Army as a whole was forced to retreat hastily and in growing confusion.

#### Negotiations by Social Democratic Leaders in Vienna

Under these circumstances the negotiations that Vilmos Böhm began in Vienna with representatives of the Entente Powers gained new substance. The Allies laid down their conditions in eight points, upon the fulfilment of which they would halt the advance of the Rumanians. In the leading place among the conditions was the demand for the resignation of the Governing Council, the setting up of a new provisional government, consisting of trade union and labour leaders which would gradually be expanded to include representatives of other sections of society. Böhm and a number of the Social Democratic leaders recommended the acceptance of these terms. The Governing Council as a whole, however, hesitated, and Béla Kun refused to consider the Council's resignation. The Peace Conference approved the negotiations going on in Vienna, even though it did not recognize the Social Democratic leaders as a negotiating party and did not officially endorse the agreement embodied in the eight points. But in its statement on 26 July, it declared that it refused to negotiate on any issue with the Governing Council, and encouraged every initiative directed towards its resignation.

#### The July Offensive. The Fall of the Soviet Republic

Towards the last days of July, the situation at the front grew catastrophic: the Rumanian troops crossed the Tisza and were only 100 kilometres from Budapest. The Governing Council debated the situation at a dramatic session on 31 July, and although a number of the Communists were in favour of continuing resistance, the Council did not believe that further resistance was feasible.

On 1 August, at the last session of the Budapest Central Workers' Council, the resignation of the Governing Council was announced, and a new government made up of trade union leaders, headed by Gyula Peidl, was named. This marked the end of the 133-day history of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. Without any territory to which it could withdraw, a small country surrounded by a ring of hostile states, the Soviet Republic had no hope of survival in the face of the united might of the allied Great Powers. In its downfall, mistaken political decisions, economic difficulties and various internal conflicts undoubtedly all played a role; the chief factor, however, was the international situation which was unfavourable to the existence of the Hungarian Soviet Republic.



*Chapter IX*

THE HORTHY REGIME  
(1919-1944)

# 1. THE RISE TO POWER OF THE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY REGIME (1919-1923)

## The Trade Union Government

The Hungarian Soviet Republic was defeated by the superior strength of the Czech and Rumanian armies. In the early days of August 1919, the Rumanian army, enjoying the support of the internal counter-revolutionary forces and the approval of the Entente Powers, advanced towards Budapest unobstructed. In the capital, after the resignation of the Soviet government on 1 August, a so-called 'trade union government', composed entirely of moderate Social Democrats under the leadership of Gyula Peidl, took power. After the collapse of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the right wing of the Social Democrats, which had rejected the revolutionary programme, gained the upper hand in the government. These politicians reasoned that if they liquidated the measures of the Soviet Republic, and if they helped to restore private property and the old state apparatus, they would succeed in establishing a democratic system. Motivated by this reasoning, the trade union government, on 2 August, released the political prisoners arrested in the time of the Soviet Republic, abolished the 'revolutionary tribunals' and restored the old law courts. On the following day, it dissolved the Red Guard and restored the old police force with their former commanders. On 4 August, the nationalized tenement houses were handed back to their former owners, and at the same time the decrees of the Soviet Republic that had provided for lower rents were invalidated. The last of the series of hastily issued orders was the measure of 6 August which handed back the industrial and commercial enterprises that had been declared public property to their original owners. The drafts of the orders restoring the landed estates and the gendarmerie had also been drawn up, but the Social Democratic government was given no time to issue the latter. In vain it had hoped to preserve its own positions of power and realize the establishment of the country's democratic system by rapidly doing away with the institutions of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The ruling classes, the officers of the army and the leading public officials, frightened by the revolutions and fearing for their positions

and property, together with many middle and smallholders and certain petty bourgeois elements, all sought a secure and firm basis for their restored rule in a bloody dictatorship. They rejected not only socialism, but also democracy and liberalism, which according to them sprang from the same source and ultimately led to the same result. In the period following the crushing of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, when the working-class and peasant masses constituting the support of genuine democracy were on the defensive, when their ranks were not only being decimated but also disorganized, when many of the democratic intellectuals were considered as 'compromised' by the revolutions, not even the conditions for bourgeois democracy existed in Hungary.

For the ruling classes and the counter-revolutionary circles the trade union government could only be provisionally tolerated as a necessary evil. For their purposes it was convenient to have a labour government, led by trade union functionaries, liquidate the achievements of the Soviet Republic. But they no longer had the patience to use resourceful tactics in order to ensure a disguised transition; at the first available opportunity they pushed aside the trade union government. When the Rumanian troops occupied Budapest on 3 August, and two days later the official Entente mission arrived, the position of the counter-revolution was consolidated. On 6 August, a small armed group carried out a coup and disposed of the Peidl government.

### **The White Terror**

Nevertheless, during these months the old ruling circles, the old political guard, did not yet take over direct political rule. The aristocratic representatives of the pre-revolutionary governments and parties, who had also played a leading role in organizing the counter-revolution, did not directly seize the reins as yet. The various lower middle-class groups, and the politicians representing them, played much the greater role during these months. These politicians filled important positions in the governments that succeeded each other. On 7 August, István Friedrich, a former entrepreneur, an insignificant politician who vacillated between the Károlyi government's policy and Habsburg legitimism and was instrumental in removing the Social Democratic government, formed his own openly counter-revolutionary regime. The shadow government that had been functioning in Szeged resigned in favour of the one in Budapest, but this did not strengthen

Friedrich's position. On 9 August, Miklós Horthy, the minister of war of the Szeged government, made the armed forces under his control independent, and refused to accept subordination to any kind of government. Thus the Friedrich government could neither count on any real armed force nor build up firm state power. It was not even able to win the official recognition of the Entente Powers. Real power was not in the hands of the constantly reshuffled government. Much more important holders of power were the government commissioners heading the counties, led by the Marquis György Pallavicini, and other big landowners. Alongside the occupying Rumanian troops, Horthy's high command, which enjoyed the support of the government commissioners, was the most powerful force in the country. The major part of the counter-revolutionary forces under Horthy's command, the so-called 'national army' at Szeged, consisted of some 25,000 men. It was made up of detachments of officers and non-commissioned officers, as well as men recruited from the landowning peasantry. The counter-revolutionary armed forces organized under the command of Baron Antal Lehár, a colonel, in the western border region of the country, which shortly submitted to the disposition of Horthy, were roughly of the same strength.

Admiral Miklós Horthy thus became the leading figure of the counter-revolution. He appeared more German than Hungarian, which he spoke faultily. He was once aide-de-camp to the Emperor Francis Joseph and the last commander of the Austro-Hungarian fleet. Although Horthy had neither military nor political ability, but was commonly known to be narrow-minded and very impressionable, he still proved to be quite suited for the role of leading the counter-revolution. He was predestined for this primarily by his implacable hostility toward the revolution. His regular troops were supplemented by various semi-fascist military organizations such as the Hungarian National Defence Force Association (*Magyar Országos Véderő Egyesület*—MOVE) and the Association of Vigilant Hungarians (*Ébredő Magyarok Egyesülete*—ÉME), recruited mainly from reserve officers, students, dispossessed civil servants from the former minority territories, and disreputable elements. The leader of these organizations was Gyula Gömbös, Horthy's right hand in organizing the Szeged counter-revolutionary forces. Although earlier he was merely a captain attached to the General Staff, he became under-secretary of war under Horthy in Szeged.

The units of the counter-revolutionary National Army, starting out early in August from Szeged, first advanced northward in the region between the Danube and the Tisza rivers not occupied by the Ruma-

nian troops, and then established their general headquarters in the western part of the country. They only marched into Budapest in November, following the withdrawal of the Rumanians, but by the spring of 1920, their authority covered essentially the whole territory of the country. The path of Horthy's detachments of officers was marked by savage terror. In the autumn of 1919 and in 1920, not striving for even the semblance of legality, they massacred and tortured to death persons they captured who had held offices under the Soviet Republic, Communists, and workers and peasants who had participated in the revolution. In the villages and on the estates it was enough for the landlord to complain about his farm labourers to have them hanged on the branches of the nearest acacia tree. There were an exceptionally large number of Jewish victims of the blood-bath. Unbridled anti-semitism combined with the counter-revolutionary terror led to the staging of pogroms reminiscent of the Middle Ages. For example, the Prónay detachment tortured 200 Communist and left-wing prisoners to death in the village of Marcali. In the course of the pogrom at Diszel the members of the detachment even flung children into wells. The news of the mass murders of the Prónay, Héjjas and Ostenburg detachments at Siófok, Orgovány, Izsák and Kecskemét became known throughout the world, and evoked the protests of world public opinion. Within a few months, about 5,000 people fell victim to the white terror, and 70,000 people were crammed into the crowded prisons and newly established concentration camps. The number of those who emigrated exceeded even this figure. Horthy proved that he could keep order in Hungary with a bloody hand.

The leaders of the victorious Entente Powers, who regarded the spread of the revolution that had triumphed in Russia as the greatest danger, gave their active support to the leaders of the Hungarian counter-revolution from the very beginning, and helped them to build their independent armed power and extend it to the whole country. Owing to the differences of opinion among the victorious powers, however, the French government sought to consolidate the situation in Hungary by prolonging occupation by Rumanian troops, whereas the British government backed the Hungarian counter-revolutionaries. The British, therefore, wishing to see an end to Rumanian occupation, attempted to make Horthy's armed force more acceptable by exercising some restraint upon it. They hoped to be able to rely on it to rebuild Hungary's political system. Sir George Clerk, a British diplomat, had already left for Hungary in October 1919 with this aim in mind. He held discussions about forming a more democratic government to supplant the terroristic power apparatus.

The new government, comprising several parties headed by the Christian Socialist teacher-politician Károly Huszár, was widened into a coalition by the inclusion of the Social Democratic Party. The party leader, Károly Peyer, took over the portfolio of minister of welfare. According to the agreement, the main task of the government was to call and hold elections.

#### **Class Power Relations. Horthy Elected Regent**

The parties that emerged in the autumn of 1919, prepared for the parliamentary elections announced for January 1920. It was primarily two large parties that were fighting for power. One was the Christian National Unity Party, which consisted of various party groupings: a fusion mainly of the Christian National Party, made up of pro-Habsburg big landowners, and the predominantly petty-bourgeois-backed Christian Social (Economic) Party. Even after the fusion the party retained its twofold, legitimist and Christian Socialist character and composition. The other leading party also achieved its final form through party fusions. The National Smallholders' Party led by István Nagyatádi Szabó, before the war a modest organization dominated by well-to-do peasants (though with a substantial mass base among the peasantry), had now become a political factor. To counterbalance it, the large landowning circles belonging to the National Hungarian Economic Association headed by Gyula Rubinek, organized a rival group in the form of the Agricultural Party. They then forced the two parties to merge, after which the new Smallholders' Party also preserved its twofold character. This was indicated, on the one hand, by the party's peasant wing, and, on the other, by the large landowning group that had particularly gained strength by the fusion. Side by side with these two large parties, which together constituted the 'Christian Bloc', a number of smaller parties were also organized. These included the National Civic Party, the Democratic Party and the National Liberal Party. These parties, however, had no significant masses to rely on, and were merely loose groupings of large industrialists and urban middle-class elements, including many representatives of the pre-war Party of National Work of István Tisza.

But perhaps the most influential representatives of the old political regime did not affiliate themselves to a single party, or after a brief interlude left their chosen party and founded their own independent 'dissident' groups. The circle of extra-party personalities and dis-

sidents included such figures as Counts István Bethlen, Albert Apponyi, Gyula Andrássy and József Somssich.

In post-war Hungary, after the fossilized system of parties that had developed in the period of dualism, the new parties displayed an exceptionally heterogeneous, amorphous aspect. At the elections held early in 1920, the Smallholders' Party, with a mass following among the peasantry, won a majority with 91 seats, while the Christian National Unity Party obtained 59 seats. Contrary, however, to the original aim of the Entente Powers, the elections did not promote the democratization and strengthening of the counter-revolutionary regime; in the midst of unbridled white terror there could be no genuinely free elections. Thus, for example, the use of violence against the Social Democratic Party made the participation of the party in the elections impossible and therefore the Social Democrats left the government.

The weight and significance of the government and the political parties continued to be dwarfed by the military circles that held the real power. The leaders of a special social stratum were grouped around the high command. The gentry, which regarded itself as the historical middle class and was made up largely of the section of the nobility that had lost its medium-sized lands, strove to rise with the dominant currents of the counter-revolution. These people, in the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, entered into the service of the aristocracy and found their livelihood by holding public offices, commissions in the army, and in other careers considered suitable to a gentleman. Distinctions that are hardly understandable in other countries arose; for example, a career for a gentleman was an appointment in a public office and certain intellectual professions, such as law, but a shopkeeper or businessman, however wealthy he might have been, was despised, and teachers were viewed with contempt.

In Hungarian society, imbued as it was with the spiritual heritage of feudalism and respect for social rank, the influence of the gentry was still quite strong. Because of the backwardness of capitalist development this historical middle class, together with the petty bourgeoisie, made up a considerable part of the population. These gentry or gentry-like sections of the population, already enjoying no small influence, endeavoured after the war, through the counter-revolution, to strengthen their political and material positions. They would willingly have replenished their lost or depleted family estates at the expense of the big Jewish lessees, or possibly even by curtailing the estates of the aristocracy. They aspired to lucrative positions in the large banks and major industries, at the expense of Jewish high

finance—hence their violent anti-semitism. By means of the social reforms they advocated with grandiloquence at the beginning of the new era, they really hoped to revise many things in the structure of the old regime that were unfavourable to them. Nor did they want to take a back seat politically. Since they had taken the lion's share in the counter-revolution, they did not wish to see a restored class order in the unchanged framework of the old regime. They rejected every democratic institution, accepted outright military dictatorship and rule by force, and at the same time loudly advocated chauvinism. Thus, a fascist-type movement had appeared in Hungary preceding that of Italy and German national socialism. In the spring of 1920, the National Army, which controlled the country through its military supervision, investigation and intelligence, saw a major opportunity for asserting itself by helping the leader of the military circles, Horthy, to take power. By almost overt military threat, occupying the parliament building and exploiting the anti-Habsburg attitude of the victorious powers and the neighbouring states, the officers were able on 1 March 1920 to elect Horthy as Regent of Hungary.

### **The Social Basis of Counter-Revolution.**

#### **The Land Reform**

The leading groups of big landowners and capitalists in Hungary welcomed the violent counter-revolution of the military circles of the gentry with joy, for this ensured the completion of the dirty work which they found distasteful. The recent memory of the Hungarian proletarian revolution, and the existence of Soviet Russia close by, induced the Hungarian ruling classes to permit the establishment of the most reactionary political and social system in Europe. But these big landowners and capitalists still regarded the conditions of 1919 and 1920 as temporary, and did not all view with approval the attempts of the gentry and the petty bourgeois forces to establish their independent political rule. They intended to give them only a provisional role, and it was to have been merely a question of time before they were curbed. Though this upper stratum disliked the quasi-liberalism of the dualistic regime prior to the war, they still wanted to liberalize the counter-revolutionary dictatorship by moderating its ever more unpleasant excesses, the extremist anti-semitic atrocities and other brutalities that showed complete disregard for every semblance of legality. The internal relation of forces, and, not least, the international situation, also impelled the Hungarian ruling classes in this direction. Their first



step was the appointment of Count Pál Teleki as prime minister on 19 July 1920. The change was important not only because this was the counter-revolution's first government to be based on important political personalities, but also because with this move the big landowners and capitalists took the reins of the government into their own hands. Thus, for example, the post of minister of finance was taken over by Lóránt Hegedűs, who was the director of the Association of Savings Bank and Banking Companies and of the Commercial Bank, one of the largest Hungarian financial institutions.

The Teleki government began to take measures against the excesses. It endeavoured to cast the extremist terror and nationalism into legalized forms. It sought to forestall the pogroms against the Jews, but placed anti-semitism on a legalized basis by putting into force Act XXV of 1920, which introduced the *numerus clausus*, and was aimed at curtailing the number of Jews in intellectual professions. The government took action against the military detachments that had grown distasteful to it, but showed a ruthless cruelty by passing Act XXVI of 1920, which revived corporal punishment. The government, in its efforts to consolidate its power, could be said to have resurrected the whipping post as its symbol.

At the same time, the consolidation of the regime definitely demanded the calming of the peasantry, which had been impoverished by the four years of war and had grown into a political force under the influence of the revolutions, and its isolation from the revolutionary movements. During these years, Hungary was still primarily a peasant country. After the war, the population of the country was about 7.6 million, and more than half of the people made their living by farming. Since the system of latifundia was preserved in the period of capitalist development and had deprived large masses of the means of subsistence, landlessness and the yearning for land represented an enormous source of tension. The completely landless families and those with minute holdings of only 1-5 *hold* accounted for almost three million people. The counter-revolutionary regime was unsparing in its promises to the peasantry when it assumed power in order to establish a mass following among the populace. Their interest in regaining the land and their further undisturbed possession of it made it a vital issue also for the big landowners not to adopt a too rigid attitude against the realization of a 'more just distribution of the land'. In January 1920, the journal of the National Hungarian Economic Association, an organization of the big landowners, noted: 'We are all aware that if we are unable to solve the problem of land reform satisfactorily, the excitement and unrest that is temporarily disarmed may return, and so

too may the spirit of anarchy.' Thus the big landowners sought a 'satisfactory solution'. But the Hungarian ruling circles did not really face up to this most burning question of Hungarian social and economic life. They used it first of all as a tactical means of establishing their political security. The minister of agriculture, Gyula Rubinek, delegated directly from within the National Hungarian Economic Association, finally worked out a plan for land reform which in actual practice would not have ended landlessness, and which, with its policy of 'moderation', lagged considerably behind the reforms of the surrounding states. To delude the peasant masses, they even staged what can only be called a political comedy on the day prior to the parliamentary debate on the Land Reform Bill. Rubinek resigned and handed over the portfolio of the ministry of agriculture to István Nagyatádi Szabó, so that a peasant minister should present the bill to the nation. It therefore became known to the public as 'the Nagyatádi land reform' and it was recorded by this name for posterity when it went into the statute book as Act XXXVI of 1920. It made use of only 948,000 of the country's 16,600,000 *hold* and this was the only area offered by the big landowners, which they themselves distributed in return for compensation. But among those 411,000 who received land, only 301,000 were landless or small landowning peasants. Altogether only 305,000 *hold* of land were available for the peasant claimants, hardly more than 1 *hold* per person. The members of the detachments, the National Army, the gendarmerie and the military Vitéz Order received larger parcels. Nevertheless, in the critical months of consolidating power the government succeeded in deluding the peasantry with promises of land reform.

The signing of the Peace Treaty also occurred during the administration of the Teleki government and marked the beginning of the recognition of the counter-revolutionary regime abroad. The Entente Powers exploited the rights of the victors within the framework of the Versailles Peace Treaty and settled the fate of Europe on the basis of their political and economic interests. The peace conditions of the victorious Great Powers were particularly severe with respect to Hungary. The Allies supplemented the military and financial restrictions by ensuring themselves one-sided economic and political rights. The Trianon Peace Treaty finalized the separation of Slovakia, Ruthenia, Transylvania and Croatia, populated in the main by non-Hungarians, from Hungary. Thereby the multinational Hungary which had existed within the framework of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was broken up. Only 32 per cent of the territory and 41 per cent of the population remained of the former Kingdom of Hungary.

The dreams of freedom which the oppressed national minorities had dreamt for many decades became a reality as a consequence of the war. But the Trianon Peace Treaty sanctioned not only the rightful desire of the other nationalities to be independent, but also attached a considerable area inhabited purely by Hungarians to the newly established Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania, which had been allied to the Entente Powers and which, excepting Yugoslavia, had earned merit in crushing the Hungarian Soviet Republic. Thus the national controversies and problems in the Danube valley were far from being solved. In fact, the treaty only preserved these problems. This state of affairs was only worsened by the fact that these newly established states pursued, to a certain extent, an oppressive national minority policy similar to that of the old Hungarian ruling classes.

The Hungarian government, completely isolated in its foreign policy and incapable of resigning itself to the loss of territory, was prepared to take risks to obtain a change in the situation. In the months following its accession to power it made feverish efforts to win the support of a Great Power, even at the price of considerable economic sacrifices. The first and most important attempt was the campaign launched to win over the French government. The appearance of the Schneider-Creusot group offered a welcome opportunity. This leading French financial group made an offer to take over considerable spheres of the Hungarian economy. First they proposed to lease the Hungarian State Railways and the state-run factories manufacturing rolling stock for a period of 90 years. To complete their control over transport in Hungary they hoped to obtain the rights to build a port in Budapest, the construction of which was planned to promote international trade; at the same time Schneider-Creusot made an offer to take over a major part of the shares of the Hungarian General Credit Bank, the greatest financial institution in Hungary. The realization of these plans would have meant French control over an overwhelming section of transport in Hungary, as well as key sectors of industry and banking through their interest in the state-owned engineering works and the Credit Bank. The offer was of such great importance and its political implications so clear-cut that the negotiations were conducted on intergovernmental level. They were started on 7 April 1920, and were held simultaneously with the Peace Conference in Paris. The leading negotiators were Károly Halmas on the Hungarian side, and Maurice Paléologue, secretary general of the foreign ministry, representing France. The talks at certain stages were joined by such outstanding Hungarian political personalities as Count István Bethlen and Count Imre Csáky, as well as Kornél Tolnay, the general manager of the

Hungarian State Railways, and Adolf Ullmann, general manager of the Credit Bank. The Schneider-Creusot group was represented by its president, Count Saint-Sauveur.

The letter of option drawn up by the Hungarian side during the month of May, in addition to handing over economic positions extending to an extremely wide sphere, guaranteed a minimum profit after the initial investments, should the net income be less than 6 per cent of the capital stock. At the same time Hungary only asked for a share of any profits exceeding 8 per cent of the capital.

In return for all this Horthy and his political friends asked for French support at the Peace Conference when the question of the final territorial settlement came up. As stated in the instruction issued to the negotiators drawn up by the Hungarian foreign ministry on 31 May 1920: 'By offering the option the Hungarian nation is taking a great sacrifice which can be accepted by parliament only if proper compensation is given to the country. Here return of territories is primarily meant.'

However, not more than four days later, on 4 June, the representative of the Hungarian government signed the Trianon Peace Treaty. In the next few days it further became clear that—as indicated in a telegram on 7 June by Count Csáky, one of the negotiators in Paris—'greater political concessions than those outlined during the talks held so far... cannot be achieved'.

Notwithstanding this, bargaining continued, since Hungarian government circles, as a letter written on 9 June by Horthy and addressed to Count Teleki indicates, were of the opinion that 'the rectification of certain injustices contained in the Peace Treaty... could be achieved through the help of France'.

During the month of June, the main questions under discussion were Burgenland's future national status, the operations of the War Reparations Commission, the evacuation of parts of Baranya County occupied by the Serbs, and the possibility of developing the Hungarian army. In spite of the fact that even the French government had not shown any readiness to take an unequivocal stand, Lord Curzon deemed it important to notify the Hungarian prime minister by letter of the official British viewpoint, with the additional information that the French government, even if certain persons had given promises, had no intention of keeping them.

After this step by the British foreign minister, the Hungarian government felt the need to enter into explanations through its ambassador in Vienna; it said it felt obliged 'to grasp the helping hand that was extended towards us from the French side'. It would have

preferred 'had that hand been a British hand, but it was their feeling that Britain did not show enough interest towards Hungary either politically or economically that one could presume it intended to support them successfully in their efforts to reach their goals'. During the talks a wholly explicit offer was made to Britain: '...Perhaps even today some means could be found of avoiding giving a single nation, the French, a monopolistic position in Hungary'. If no else showed any interest, however, the Hungarians would be obliged to follow the path they had entered upon.

'Following the path they had entered upon' meant the military negotiations that were started in August in Paris. Military experts discussed Hungarian rearmament, linked with the possibility of joining the anti-Soviet war. The long drawn-out negotiations petered out in November, however, because of protests by the British, Italian and other governments allied with France and the failure of the anti-Soviet offensive in the meantime.

The inability of the French to return ceded Hungarian territories and the clear-cut opposition expressed by the British and Italian governments resulted in the Teleki government's withdrawal from the talks with France. On 20 November, the Hungarian foreign ministry informed 'the French consortium which was asking for the repeated extension of the option that the council of ministers is not in a position to undertake the extension of the option'. At the same time, however, it pointed out that 'after the successful completion of the long-standing political negotiations the offer to the French syndicate might be renewed'.

The only part of the enormous transaction that was realized in the end was that two-thirds of the 300,000 new shares launched by the Credit Bank were taken over by the French consortium, and Count Saint-Sauveur joined the board of the Bank. In February 1922, a contract was signed for the construction of an international free port on the Danube at Csepel, south of Budapest, and the French group was given a 50-year concession in exchange for their part of the construction costs. Thus, the planned large-scale French incursion produced no more than a political *rapprochement*; no territorial adjustments were attained and the political isolation proved insurmountable.

In the period following the conclusion of the Peace Treaty, especially from the spring of 1921 onwards, a new political situation arose: for the time being, unity among the victorious Entente Powers had strengthened. This was reflected in their policy of opposition to the extremist revanchist trends appearing in the defeated countries. These revanchist trends and their representatives constituted a threat to the

Versailles peace system and the political aims of the victorious great powers in Europe. But this opposition, and the internal political situation, drove the Hungarian ruling classes to make even greater efforts towards consolidation, for by 1921 it became more and more obvious that they had not succeeded in defeating the working class and the labour movement.

### Resistance of the Working Class

The concentrated attack begun in the autumn of 1919 against the working class and was not restricted to murder, political pogroms and brutal terroristic measures. A whole array of economic, organizational and ideological means was employed in an effort to break the labour movement. All the social welfare measures which the Hungarian Soviet Republic had adopted were abolished. Despite the tremendous number of unemployed—approximately 150,000 people—unemployment relief was ended. The eight-hour working day, which had been adopted in 1918, was again extended to nine and ten hours, and in the mining industry 12-hour working shifts were not infrequent. Wages were reduced to 50 per cent of the level established by the Soviet Republic. A general attack was launched on the organizations of the working class. The Communist Party was driven underground. A series of outrages was committed against the trade unions. More than once trade union premises were closed by the authorities and their property was confiscated, while union members themselves were ruthlessly persecuted. Attempts were made to disrupt the independent organizations of the working class by nationalist and anti-semitic incitement, and even by the setting up of new organizations. With state support, Christian Socialist trade unions were established to counterbalance the socialist labour movement, and between 1919 and 1921 various pseudo-working-class parties were created with state subsidies, such as the Hungarian National Workers' Party and the Hungarian Socialist Party. But these artificially created little parties were unable to survive for more than a few months. The majority of the workers rejected the nationalist-fascist ideology and the organizations brought into existence to spread it. Even at the time of the most ruthless terror and persecution the membership of the trade unions numbered 150,000, one and a half times more than in the period preceding the First World War. Considerable numbers of workers continued to support the Social Democratic Party. Although after the defeat of the Hungarian Soviet Republic the party's leadership fell

into the hands of a moderate group, the existence and activities of the party served as the legal framework for the organization of the class-conscious and anti-capitalist section of the working class which opposed the counter-revolutionary dictatorship.

A considerable number of strikes broke out as early as the very first and most dangerous weeks of the white terror. On 6 September, mass strikes of miners broke out in Tatabánya and Felsőgalla in reply to the reduction in their wages and the restoration of the 12-hour working day. Soon the miners of Nagymányok, Szászvár and Komló also joined the strike. The authorities only succeeded in breaking it after deploying an armoured train and a large force of the gendarmerie against the miners, killing several with a volley of rifle fire, and by placing the mines under military supervision. In 1920, the workers celebrated May Day with an extensive strike, despite the large-scale mobilization of armed forces.

Amidst the fury of the white terror, the Communist Party again regained its feet. Never before had a party functioned under such difficult conditions in Hungary. A large number of its leaders and best activists were either compelled to go into exile, or fell victim to the white terror. The prisons were filled with Communists, and suspicion was enough for arrest. Nevertheless, amidst conditions of underground struggle, the restoration of the party was begun.

Under the direction of the Communist leaders living in exile, such as Béla Kun and Jenő Landler, and the organizations of the Hungarian Communist Party functioning abroad, the circulation of the illegal Communist newspapers *Proletár* (Proletarian) and *Kommün* (Commune) was begun in Hungary. By 1920 and 1921, the first underground groups were established in several factories in Budapest, as well as in the mining region of Tatabánya and in the Borsod industrial district.

### Political Consolidation under Bethlen

During 1921 it became obvious to the government that it was impossible to ignore the political presence of the working class permanently. Nor could they succeed in winning it to their side. Only by taking into account the real conditions of the international situation and the actual forces at home could they carry out the economic and political strengthening of their system. This meant that the white terror had to be replaced by lawful forms of rule; this was the way in which the regime's economic and political existence could be ensured. But such a policy demanded that those forces which rejected a more liberal

policy of consolidation be pushed into the background. These were the military and racist circles, whose influence was still extremely significant, and who feared for their positions, should the pre-war political ruling groups reassert their power. The Smallholders' Party, although not opposing such consolidation, also strove jealously to preserve its political position. Under such conditions, those who had hoped to retain the rule of the latifundia and the big capitalists using the old methods, while completely ignoring the army and the smallholders, could not come to prominence. This was the reason why, after the resignation of Teleki, the choice fell on Count István Bethlen who took over the leadership of the government on 14 April 1921.

István Bethlen was the leading figure of the Anti-Bolshevik Committee, the organization of the counter-revolution in Vienna. He belonged to an old landowning family from Transylvania. The influential group of old leading politicians, which had remained outside party affiliations, gathered around Bethlen. He seemed all the more suitable since his political past was not linked with the pre-war government party of István Tisza, compromised among the gentry and petty bourgeoisie, but with its opposition. Thus Bethlen's policy won wide support. He not only enjoyed the absolute confidence of the big landowning and capitalist groups, even the elements who wanted to increase their own influence by relegating the latifundia and big capital somewhat into the background regarded him as acceptable. Count István Bethlen was far from being a political leader of European stature. Undoubtedly, however, he possessed much broader political vision, more tactical sense and diplomatic ability than the overwhelming majority of Hungarian politicians. The consolidation of the Horthy regime was, therefore, bound up with the activity of the Bethlen government.

One of the decisive elements of Bethlen's programme of consolidation was his policy toward the working class. Above all, it was necessary to confine the terror to 'constitutional' forms. Accordingly, the Bethlen government vigorously continued the 'legalization' begun by the Teleki government. It developed its organizations of power, the police, the gendarmerie and the judicial organs for use against the revolutionary movements of the workers and peasants. Bethlen employed effective constitutional forms of repression against the reviving Communist movement, when in 1921, among his earliest measures, he outlawed the Communist Party (Act III of 1921) 'in order to ensure more effective social and state order'. But he rejected the standpoint of the extreme right wing and gave up the policy of outlawing the whole labour movement. Under the pressure of that movement he

recognized the existence of the independent organizations of the working class, the trade unions and the Social Democratic Party. He ensured the legal status of these organizations and, at the same time, by using their moderate leaders, he endeavoured to incorporate them into his consolidated regime and turn them into his 'loyal opposition'.

The leadership of the Social Democratic Party fell entirely into the hands of the theoretically untrained and politically insignificant functionaries of the party's right wing. Once in control, they repeatedly and unmistakably voiced their willingness to come to terms. In December 1921, negotiations began between the government and the leaders of the Social Democratic Party, and on 22 December, Bethlen and the Social Democratic leader, Károly Peyer, signed a pact. Under its terms, the party's executive undertook to support the consolidation, to prevent political strikes and to cease campaigning for a republic. They also undertook to refrain from doing any kind of organizing and canvassing among agricultural, railway and civil service workers, and they agreed to make use of their international connections in support of the regime. In return, the government made certain concessions. Among others, it promised the Social Democratic Party less restricted opportunities for organizing, agreed to release imprisoned party members, and conceded the Social Democrats a limited number of seats in parliament. This pact was exceptionally advantageous for the government because it gained substantial political support at home and, at the same time, it was able to demonstrate the democratization of the regime abroad. Simultaneously with these moves related to the working class, Bethlen strove to establish a grouping suitable to consolidation within the ruling classes, above all to form a united government party.

Bethlen and his group had already made efforts, in the summer of 1920, to create a united government party. At that time he sought a solution through the fusion of the two parties of the Christian Bloc, the Smallholders' Party and the Christian National Unity Party, but without success. By 1921, the situation had changed considerably. The owners of the largest estates and the leading groups of the aristocracy felt that the time had come for them to attempt the restoration of the political conditions of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's conservative rule and to bring back the Habsburgs to the Hungarian throne. The extremist royalist circles led by Count Gyula Andrássy attempted to seize power by a coup in the spring of 1921. On 26 March, Charles, the ex-king, unexpectedly appeared in Szombathely, on the western frontier of the country, where he called on the Bishop, Count János Mikes, and surrounded by the legitimist aristocracy went to

Budapest and began negotiations with Horthy on the taking over of power. But the talks ended fruitlessly. Horthy, who up to then had emphasized his loyalty to the king, was unwilling to relinquish power. The king thereupon left the country. Another coup was planned in October. This time, instead of fruitless negotiations, force was decided upon. Charles once more appeared in Hungary, this time with a pledge of allegiance from the troops stationed in Western Hungary, and proceeded towards Budapest. He even formed a government on the way. But Horthy and Bethlen remained masters of the situation. Units of the army, reinforced by the militaristic-fascist organizations led by Gyula Gömbös, clashed with the troops of the ex-king and easily defeated them at Budaörs, near Budapest, on 23 October. Charles again left the country, never to return, and died not long afterward. Legitimism suffered a final defeat.

Charles's chances of success were much impaired by the vigorous protests of the neighbouring countries (Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia, forming the Little Entente) and the Great Powers, who threatened military intervention if the Habsburgs were restored. Relying on this external pressure, the internal anti-Habsburg forces—that is, all those groups of the ruling classes, of the gentry and petty bourgeoisie, which did not wish to build the new regime on the basis of the conservative aristocratic political system of the old Monarchy—declared the dethronement of the Habsburg House on 6 November 1921. Thus the Christian National Unity Party—the fortress of legitimism—suffered a serious political defeat and split up into groups. After that Bethlen no longer had to reckon with this party.

The fusion of the leading parties could now no longer lead to the establishment of a united government party. In this situation Bethlen employed new tactics to overcome the resistance of the Smallholders' Party. István Nagyatádi Szabó said in a speech during those weeks: 'We are not so simple-minded that when we are in a majority we shall stand aside.' But Bethlen, by threatening to expose a scandal involving Lajos Esküdt, one of the secretaries of the Smallholders' Party, and by supporting the more propertied faction in the Smallholders' Party, finally succeeded in breaking the opposition. On 5 January 1922, Bethlen, with a few of his followers, appeared at a dinner of the Smallholders' Party and solemnly announced that he was joining the party. Following this move, an influx of non-party politicians into the Smallholders' Party began. For a time it retained its name, but later it was renamed the United Party. But whatever its name, the leadership was now in the hands of Bethlen and his followers.

The building of the new party was completed in the elections of



May and June 1922. The counter-revolutionary regime, while retaining the institution of parliament, in reality weakened it until it constituted no danger to the government, which was intent on building an essentially single-party system. The parliamentary system itself was not a guarantee of true democratic opposition. Bethlen's statement that the secret ballot 'was not compatible with the Hungarian people's open character', became notorious. For it was thus that he rejected the secret ballot and introduced open voting, which, with the help of police terror and a substantial limitation of the franchise, precluded surprises of any kind. On the basis of the pact with the Social Democratic Party, a secret ballot was allowed only in Budapest and a few other towns. At the elections, very few of the representatives of the old Smallholders' Party remained on the list of candidates of the United Party; of the 140 representatives of the new government party only 19 were former Smallholders. As a result, the composition of the government party's parliamentary representation was again very similar to that of the Party of National Work of Tisza, and parliament resembled closely the House of the era of dualism. In the parliament of the Horthy regime the opposition could muster only an insignificant number of deputies. The Social Democratic Party, which was entering the parliamentary elections for the first time in Hungary, won greater representation, in fact, than had been anticipated by Bethlen. Proof of the steadfastness of the working class was the fact that in Budapest it drew 40 per cent of the votes, and even in electoral districts that used an open ballot—in a few industrial and mining regions—it won 7 seats and obtained more than 15 per cent of all the votes cast for a total representation of 24 seats. A few representatives of the liberal bourgeois and petty bourgeois opposition also were elected to parliament, chiefly by Budapest voters.

But the course of the consolidation was substantially influenced by the attitudes of the adherents of the extremist fascist trends and the gentry-militarist circles who had played a leading role in the white terror. These groups, realizing the necessity of the consolidation of the regime, at first supported Bethlen. In the critical year of 1921, therefore, both in the fight against legitimism, and in the political struggle to smash the Smallholders' Party and to establish the United Party, they played a great role and gave Bethlen effective assistance. The importance of their role can be seen in the fact that their leader, Gyula Gömbös, became the powerful vice-chairman of the new government party. But Bethlen, as a representative of the traditional leading groups of the big landowners and capitalists, wanted to relegate these extremist military circles to the subordinate position they had

held in the time of the Dual Monarchy. The differences between the groups headed by Bethlen and Gömbös came to a head in 1922, when Gömbös and his followers had already accomplished the 'dirty work' of establishing order and when the upper ten thousand once more felt secure with an organized state apparatus at their disposal. Advancing step by step, the government divested the extreme right-wing groups of the power they held. In the name of 'law and order' it did away with their independent armed forces, and put an end to their secret military supervision of the state apparatus and their unrestricted powers in military intelligence. It brought all these functions and bodies strictly under its own authority. The role of the separate armed detachments was taken over by the police and gendarmerie. The control of the army and of the General Staff also came into the hands of the government. Gömbös and his circle clearly recognized that they had become superfluous ballast in the government's airship. But without armed force they could not halt the trend of events. Exploiting the disappointment with the land reform, they tried in vain to create a mass basis among the smallholders by reviving the old land reform demagoguery. They organized a strike of civil service workers, but all in vain. Their preparations for a fascist coup proved fruitless. The government, by a number of political manoeuvres, such as an announcement that the land reform law was being amended and made more radical, by the concentration of troops around the capital, by the dispersing of demonstrations by police and the arrest of the leading organizers of the coup, easily combated their attempts. Horthy also recognized that, in the interests of consolidating his power, he had to accommodate himself to the realities of power in Europe. He supported Bethlen's policy. In a friendly chat with one of Gömbös's close party associates he not only expressed this unequivocally, but also added that he would order the police to fire on disorderly right-wing elements, as he would on disorder stemming from the left, the only difference being that he would 'do the former with a heavy heart, and the latter with pleasure'.

By the summer of 1923, the already unequal struggle was decided finally in Bethlen's favour. Gömbös resigned his office in the United Party, and withdrew from it with a few of his associates who professed the same views. Shortly afterwards, they founded the Party of Racial Defence as a right-wing opposition to the government.



### Character of the Horthy Regime. Fascism and Conservatism

The final touches of the political consolidation, therefore, settled for good the character of the Horthy regime that was being strengthened under Bethlen's political leadership. Fascist tendencies, which marked the counter-revolutionary regime from its birth, and which were not liquidated by the political consolidation, were forced into the background.

Thus, as a result of the consolidation, a system of authoritarian dictatorship was brought about, in which the elements of fascism mingled with the legality of conservative and reactionary views. Because of this conservative legality, particularly in the latter part of the 1920s, the Horthy regime affected a semblance of liberalism. However, in several respects the liberal institutions were mere trappings. There was a parliamentarianism of sorts, but of a type in which the majority of representatives were tools in the hands of the leaders of the state apparatus. A multi-party system existed, but the supremacy of the government party was maintained by ruthless methods, resulting in what was virtually one-party rule. Certain civil rights, such as a limited suffrage and the freedom of assembly and organization, were formally guaranteed, but their application and use was almost totally dependent on the whims of the police and state apparatus. In order to secure a leading role for the traditional ruling classes, Bethlen based his administration on the alliance of capitalists, big landowners and state bureaucracy. In determining the main principles of the government's policy, the fascist ambitions of the gentry and the army officers were only partially asserted. In the execution of that policy, however, this stratum was of fundamental importance, because, as with dictatorial fascist-type systems in general, the state bureaucracy was politically powerful and had to be reckoned with.

The police and gendarme terror was still reminiscent of the mentality of the counter-revolutionary armed detachments. The consolidated regime remained chauvinistic and aggressively irredentist. The official ideology, the so-called 'Szeged idea' (the counter-revolutionary movement started out from the town of Szeged), adorned with high-flown adjectives like 'Christian' and 'national', was conceived in the spirit of Hungarian supremacy. The ideology of cultural superiority and the idea of Hungarian political leadership in the Danube valley, together with the savage persecution of liberalism, democracy and communism as 'alien to the Hungarian people', permeated the whole school system, the press and political life. The pogroms ceased, but many citizens were

nevertheless barred from numerous areas of public life because of their Jewish faith, and the few Jewish students admitted to the universities were exposed to physical injury as the result of organized campaigns of harassment.

From the 1920s similar authoritarian regimes arose in a number of Eastern European countries. They differed in many respects from the Italian fascist and the German national socialist regimes, yet had numerous basic similarities. Despite the national characteristics that found expression in the individual countries, a feature peculiar to almost all of them was that these Eastern European regimes could not rely on broad mass support: they could not masquerade in the garb of social revolution as in Italy, and later on in Germany. The social structure of the Eastern European countries, among them Hungary, was so backward, landlessness and pauperization engendered such social contradictions and, in contrast, the ruling classes preserved their feudal-aristocratic aspect to such an extent, that a fascist mass party of the petty bourgeoisie, ultimately co-operating with the ruling classes, could not develop, or came about only later, during the Second World War. Thus, the application of fascist methods was not always accompanied by the social demagoguery so typical of total fascism. (A reference to this peculiarity was made by one of the right-wing opposition members of parliament, who, speaking of Bethlen, said: 'His whole administration is built on the fact that the situation is so delicate that one has to walk on tiptoe and it is impossible to carry out any desirable reforms... for he is always afraid that the reforms will upset the country.' Since the bolstering of the dictatorial system with the necessary, mainly petty bourgeois, mass following did not happen and since there was no party of the masses which would have strengthened the power of the state, more moderate regimes amalgamating the conservative-aristocratic forms of rule and the authoritarian fascist forms, came into existence in several Eastern European countries.

### Economic Reconstruction. Industry and Agriculture

In the period of consolidation the economic reconstruction of Hungary slowly advanced. The loss of the war was followed by an economic collapse. The productive capacity of industry, which had been geared entirely to supplying the army, had to be converted to a peace-time economy. But this was hampered by serious difficulties. Mines, factories and machines had deteriorated, while the fuel and raw material

resources of the country were depleted. The shortage of materials was aggravated by the restrictions imposed on Hungary by the Trianon Treaty, as well as by the country's isolation, the total disorganization of its international contacts, and by the hostile policy it pursued towards neighbouring countries. Under such circumstances, the resumption of production on a peace-time basis could not be realized until 1921. Industrial production—calculated in actual value in the 1920 territory—as compared to the level in 1913, was around 20–30 per cent in 1920, and even in 1922 it was only around 52–54 per cent; and about one-third of all workers were unemployed.

During these same years, agricultural production also declined seriously. Wheat yields in 1920 dropped to half of those of the year 1913 (from 20 million quintals to 10.3 million quintals), and there were one-fifth fewer cattle in 1923 and one-third fewer pigs and sheep than before the war. There was a food shortage in the country and the population suffered from hunger.

Against this tremendous shortage of commodities the circulation of currency increased by leaps and bounds. The creeping inflation that had begun during the war assumed catastrophic proportions following the victory of the counter-revolution. In building its military organization and state apparatus the regime used up enormous sums, which it rushed to replace by issuing unbacked paper bank-notes. An indication of the scope of the inflation was the fact that by the spring of 1924, 16,300 paper crowns were worth one gold crown. The serious inflation was partly a consequence of the deliberate financial policy of the government and the big capitalists. By allowing inflation to run unchecked, they shifted the costs of repairing the damage caused by the war, and of reconversion to a peace-time economy, on to the working population, primarily the working class and employees, by reducing the actual purchasing power of their earnings. In 1923, real wages were equal to only half of what they had been before the World War. As a result of the inflation, however, the big landowners freed themselves of some 1,500 million gold crowns worth of mortgages, which they easily paid off with the almost worthless paper bank-notes. For a while, inflation was also extremely favourable to the big capitalists. It helped to bring about an unprecedented demand for commodities and a rise in prices, against which the costs of production remained extremely low. The inflation and the embargo on imports helped to create an inflationary prosperity between 1922 and 1924, and the launching of peace-time production on a large scale took place against this background. Within this framework the previously undeveloped branches of industry, for example the textile industry, underwent

rapid development. The result of all this was that by 1924 the production of industry was up to 60 per cent of the pre-war level. Although inflation served as an important weapon for a time in the Bethlen government's economic consolidation, it soon became necessary to curb it. Its prolongation disrupted the framework of production and trade and became a serious obstacle to the building of vital international economic relations. Furthermore, owing to its extremely widespread effect on living standards, it was fraught with political dangers.

The Hungarian ruling classes, however, were unwilling to assume the burdens of stabilization, and decided to take on foreign loans. There were also political reasons for this decision. With the mediation of Britain in the spring of 1924, it finally became possible for the government to borrow a large sum, to the value of 307.5 million pengő, from the League of Nations. The loan, which had to be repaid at an exceptionally high rate of interest, 7.5 per cent, resulted in the placing of Hungary under the financial supervision of the League of Nations, which actually meant supervision by British and American finance. At the same time, Hungary had to undertake the repayment of her share of the debt stemming from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which amounted to 1,345 million pengő. Thus the country was burdened by tremendous debts, and this made it necessary to ask for still more loans. Almost simultaneously with the financial stabilization, as the last phase of the economic consolidation, new customs regulations were introduced to replace the system of embargoes. The new regulations which came into effect on 1 January 1925, imposed a 30 per cent duty on an average on all imports, thus serving as a protectionist tariff for industry. By 1924, therefore, the stabilization of economic life was completed, and normal conditions for the economy were for the time being restored.

Industrial production developed at an increasing pace also. In 1929, the value of production was more than 12 per cent greater than in 1913. But this fact, in itself, showed quite clearly that Hungarian industrial development was not characterized by any great prosperity and the country was not one of the most rapidly developing nations, for in this period production increased by 70 per cent in the United States and about 40 per cent in France. In certain branches of manufacturing industry there was no progress at all in comparison with the pre-war level. The food industry, primarily, was in a critical state. The rise in the total production of industry was mainly the consequence of the rapid increase in the textile, paper and leather industries. The textile industry increased its output to three times the pre-war level by 1929.

If the advance in industry was rather moderate, agriculture showed signs of even less prosperity owing to the fact that the disintegration of the Monarchy resulted in the loss of the greater part of its markets. The grain flooding Europe from overseas countries constituted insurmountable competition for the products of Hungarian agriculture, the more so since the policy of agrarian protective tariffs spread throughout Europe.

No favourable change occurred with regard to the basic obstacle to the development of agriculture, the system of large estates. The distribution of property in Hungary, owing to territorial alterations, only worsened. While before the war 40 per cent of the country's arable land was in the hands of owners of property exceeding 100 *hold*, now the corresponding figure was approximately 44 per cent. The peasantry and agrarian proletariat, who made up 95.6 per cent of the people engaged in agriculture, owned only 3.7 per cent of the land. In contrast to the estates of 222,000 *hold* of the Esterházy princes, the 96,000 *hold* of the Festetics counts and the 90,000 *hold* of the Cathedral Chapter of Eger, the peasantry had only starvation plots, and the majority of them did not have even these.

Consequently, despite moderate technical development, such as the increase in the number of tractors and the somewhat greater use of chemical fertilizers, average yields and production results showed no rise over the pre-war level. The supply of livestock remained stationary, and in fact the number of cattle and sheep actually declined.

The limitations of economic development made their appearance in the financial sphere also. Following the loan from the League of Nations, the problem of financing the economy still remained unsolved. Because of the extremely low level of domestic accumulation, the resources of the international monetary market had repeatedly to be used. There was no difficulty in securing credits, and in the second half of the twenties, credits amounting to 3,100 million *pengős* poured into Hungary. But only a fraction of these tremendous sums, about a fifth, was devoted to productive investment. The burden of high interest and annual remittances posed ever greater financial problems for the government from year to year. About half of the loans, 1,650 million *pengős*, were used to repay interest and principal, but by 1929 these sums were greater than the newly obtained credits, and the gold and foreign currency reserves of the National Bank began to melt away. But the dark side of the Bethlen government's monetary policy had not yet become obvious in the twenties. The Bethlen regime appeared sound, for economic difficulties had not yet undermined it.

### Foreign Policy Aimed at Revision of the Peace Treaty. Italo-Hungarian Alliance

Immediately after 1919, the foreign policy of the Hungarian governments was characterized by a nurturing of unrealistic plans of aggression. Above all they would have liked to join the intervention against Soviet Russia so as to be able to share in the victory over communism. The governments of the Great Powers would then have been more likely to regard benignly efforts to regain parts of Hungary's former territories. The foreign policy of the Horthy regime was characterized, on the one hand, by a most vigorous anti-communism, and, on the other, by a policy of irredentism, which constantly agitated for a revision of frontiers. Typically, in the second half of the decade following the war, Hungarian government circles were unwilling to establish political or economic relations with the Soviet Union, although an ever increasing number of states, among them Britain and even Mussolini's Italy, had already done so.

The Hungarian ruling circles concentrated their foreign political activities on promoting the revision of the territorial stipulations of the Peace Treaty. Early in the 1920s, there was little chance of success for this policy, because the victorious Great Powers wished to preserve the Versailles peace settlement by all means. This policy won new support in the form of the Little Entente, in which Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia formed a common front, primarily against Hungarian revisionist aspirations. In these years, therefore, Hungary was completely isolated in foreign policy from the Great Powers, who were striving to maintain the status quo, and from her neighbours. In the realization of their plans, the natural ally of the ruling classes would have been Germany, the country most interested in revising the peace treaty. But the official government policy of the Germany of the Weimar Republic turned towards the Western Powers in these years, in the hope of obtaining a loan and a cancellation of war reparations and other restrictions. Neither its home nor its foreign policy accorded with co-operation with the Horthy regime and its revisionist claims. Britain did extend a certain amount of foreign political support to Horthy, primarily to counterbalance the Little Entente which was under French influence, resulting in Hungary winning membership in the League of Nations and also a loan from the League. On the other hand, Britain refused to support the Hungarian plans to disrupt the Versailles peace settlement. Thus Hungary's foreign political position, even in the middle of the decade, was still unsettled, notwithstanding a certain measure of political and economic consolida-

tion achieved at home. As a matter of fact, the final consolidation of the counter-revolutionary regime itself had not yet been completed. To do this, the ruling classes needed a foreign policy which expressed the essence of the Horthy regime: revision of the Peace Treaty. This was what the Bethlen government hoped to achieve in the second half of the 1920s.

In 1926, the Hungarian government, endeavouring to disrupt the Little Entente, made an attempt to attain a *rapprochement* with Yugoslavia. Horthy's address marking the 400th anniversary of the battle of Mohács reflected this effort. Diplomatic discussions began and it almost seemed that Hungary would succeed in establishing friendly relations with at least one of her neighbours. The price of such friendly relations, however, would have been the setting aside of revisionist aspirations with regard to Yugoslavia. This caused no small amount of wavering in the Hungarian government, which Italy was quick to exploit by persuading the government to conclude instead an Italo-Hungarian agreement. Thus, Italy was the first among the Great Powers to express her dissatisfaction with the Versailles peace settlement. The Hungarian government was, therefore, impelled towards an alliance with Italy not only because of a fascist ideological kinship, but also by practical political considerations. As the result of Bethlen's discussions in Rome in April 1927, an Italo-Hungarian Treaty of Friendship was signed, with secret clauses referring to the rearmament of Hungary and containing assurances of mutual support in case of a joint attack on Yugoslavia. Hungary thus embarked on the road to the creation of a new system of alliances.

Simultaneously with the conclusion of the Italo-Hungarian alliance Bethlen attempted with great energy to forge closer links with Germany. He believed that only if Hungary joined an Italo-German military alliance would he see his revisionist plans well founded and completed. Bethlen's foreign political aim—the establishment of an Italian-German-Hungarian alliance—was not realized at this time; nevertheless this plan did create a basis for the regime's later foreign policy.

The plans for the revision of the Peace Treaty found an unexpected supporter in the person of Lord Harmsworth Rothermere, the British press magnate. To the great enthusiasm of Hungarian government circles, Lord Rothermere published an article in the 21 June 1927 edition of the *Daily Mail*, in which he urged the revision of the Trianon Treaty and named as a precondition for strengthening security in Central Europe the return to Hungary of border areas with a total population of about two million. Although this partial

revision of the frontiers was far from satisfying the ruling circles, it was an excellent opportunity for propaganda, and led to much political activity inside Hungary. The Revisionist League, a supra-party body, was set up. The Hungarian press jumped on the handwagon with great enthusiasm. It endeavoured to exploit Rothermere's stand against Czechoslovakia and the telegram he sent to Edward Beneš in defence of the rights of Hungarians living in that country as an important means of influencing public opinion in favour of territorial adjustment.

The British government had, of course, no part in Rothermere's action. A leading article published in *The Times* of 27 July left no doubt about that. Commenting on Rothermere's article it rejected the propaganda for an adjustment of the frontier and advocated the development of economic unity among the Central European countries. At the December session of the League of Nations Council, Prime Minister Chamberlain told István Bethlen that he was glad to hear that the Hungarian government was keeping aloof from the campaign and advised it to do so in the future as well. In any case he regarded the campaign as harmful.

Rothermere's private campaign, however, gained further impetus in the spring of 1928. He sent money 'to help the refugees' and in March had talks with Mussolini in Rome. Later he sent his son Esmond Harmsworth to Budapest, where he was invited to lunch by Admiral Horthy and was also received by Prime Minister Bethlen and the leading personalities of Hungary's political life. The adherents of Rothermere, aspiring after the vacant throne of Hungary, openly voiced the necessity for the simultaneous solution of the territorial adjustment and the royal question. Jenő Rákosi, a noted advocate of irredentist politics, published several articles on the subject in the *Pesti Hírlap*. On 26 October 1928 he wrote: 'We need a king whose abilities, character and financial strength will precipitate the preconditions for the country's moral and economic regeneration. Ultimately he should be a modern king, whose authority is guaranteed not by court etiquette and by the household guard but by the fact that he is armed mentally, spiritually and materially for the new world before us.'

However, in the twenties, the revisionist cause could not be the means for a British lord to gain a throne. The failure of official Britain to support the case, internecine strife and the differences between the legitimists, liberals and the gentry middle strata soon made it clear that the would-be dynasts were doomed to failure.

In the second half of the 1920s, in contrast to its lively activity in

foreign affairs, the regime strove only to preserve existing internal political conditions. But throughout Europe the years from 1924 to 1926 were characterized by a strengthening of bourgeois democratic trends—a Labour Party government in Britain, bourgeois radical trends in France, and the dominance of a policy of reconciliation in Germany. The Hungarian liberal opposition also found this atmosphere favourable for launching an attack on the Bethlen government, hoping to achieve a liberalization of the regime. The leading group of the liberal opposition, which was striving to increase its influence, was represented by Vilmos Vázsonyi's party, the National Bourgeois Democratic Party. The basis of this party was the liberal middle bourgeoisie and the urban Jewish petty bourgeoisie concentrated largely in Budapest. The attack on the government was also joined by a few legitimist politicians, while the mass basis of this so-called Democratic Bloc was provided by the opposition's alliance with the Social Democratic Party. The still waters at home were disturbed, though only briefly, by the scandal over the counterfeiting of francs that exploded in 1926.

The government's position was shaken both within the country and throughout Europe by the news that leading police and political officials, with the tacit understanding of the highest government circles, had been engaged in forging French franc bank-notes on a large scale. By cashing the notes abroad they had hoped to establish a fund for the purpose of financing revisionist propaganda and subversion in the territories of neighbouring countries. But the forgery was exposed when an attempt was made to negotiate the first bank-note, and, following an investigation conducted by international police, the identity of the persons responsible was revealed. But the European powers affected by the affair did not wish to exploit it to topple the Bethlen government, and, despite the demands of the Democratic Bloc for a few liberal reforms and their noisy parliamentary attack against the government and against Horthy himself, the government rode out the storm, although its reputation was rather badly mauled.

For the time being, there was no internal political threat to the regime. In fact, it was strengthened by the revival of the feudal house of peers as an upper house in 1927. The new Upper House received extensive rights in legislation, and its membership, which consisted primarily of Habsburg archdukes, aristocrats, delegates of autonomous bodies, special interest groups, big capitalists appointed by Horthy, and senior army officers, was an adequate guarantee that the regime's conservative character would be maintained.

### **The Workers' Movement Gains Strength. Reorganizing Congress of the Hungarian Communist Party**

Stability was successfully maintained, even against the opposition of the masses, by limiting the right to vote, and by arbitrary police and administrative measures. But even after the consolidation of the regime, social tensions continued to be great. These tensions sprang from the continued economic and social backwardness of the country. Although the moderate economic recovery that appeared in the second half of the twenties improved the situation of the working class somewhat, their living conditions were still worse than in the period before the First World War. For wide sections of the population unemployment became a permanent condition, and even at the time of the economic boom, there were 100,000 people without work. While before the war industrial unemployment in the cities was limited essentially to periods of economic depressions, and did not affect more than 3 to 5 per cent of the workers at times of favourable economic conditions, after the war, even in the period of economic improvement, 10 to 15 per cent of the workers were unemployed. In this same period poverty caused by inflation lessened considerably, but per capita real wages hardly exceeded 80 per cent of the pre-war level. While regulations concerning working time had become law in almost every country in Europe and the eight-hour working day had been generally accepted, in Hungary the length of the working day was again increased in complete disregard of the laws adopted by the Hungarian Soviet Republic. Even if the working day did not reach the pre-war average of over 10 hours, it still remained around nine hours. These inhumanly long working days affected many sections of the workers: in 1923 and 1924 some 20 to 22 per cent had to work more than 10 hours per day. Nor did the social conditions of the working class improve much in other respects. Working conditions in the factories could be judged by the fact that 73 per cent of the workers had no shower rooms at their disposal in the factories, and more than half did not have even wash-room facilities.

A constant feature in the period of the economic boom was the struggle of the workers to improve their wages and living conditions. In 1926, in the metal industry alone, there were 32 strikes; and in 1928, the number of workers taking part in the movement for wage claims was nearly 200,000. The hunger march of the Salgótarján and Pilis-vörösvár miners was a shocking indictment of the Horthy regime's economic policy. The wretched living conditions of the working class, along with their political oppression and lack of rights, proved fertile



soil for the development of the revolutionary workers' movement. At the same time the working class took advantage of the opportunities offered by the moderating of the terror experienced in the first half of the decade. Thus it became possible to reorganize the Communist Party, as a result of persistent and courageous efforts in the early years of the 1920s. In the summer of 1924, the immediate aim of the organizers was to set up Communist cells and to rally and lead the left-wing opposition. In the spring and summer of 1925, an illegal central leadership was set up in Hungary, and in August 1925, the first, or reorganizing congress of the Communist Party took place in Vienna.

From the standpoint of increasing communist influence among the workers, the fact that the limitations of underground struggle were removed in the spring of 1925 and a legal left-wing workers' party was successfully founded, had great significance. Within the Social Democratic Party the left wing, which was growing in strength under Communist leadership, demanded, in a memorandum to the Social Democratic Party leaders in March 1925, that they break their agreements with the bourgeois parties. When this demand was rejected entire branches of the party decided to withdraw their membership. On 14 April 1925, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party was formed. It had a great attraction for the left-wing working masses, since a good many of its leaders were old and popular figures in the labour movement who consistently voiced the workers' everyday political and economic aspirations. The party demanded real wages of equal value to those before the war, an eight-hour working day, unemployment relief, progressive taxes, a secret ballot and a general amnesty. At the same time, it was very significant that the party, basing its policies on the realities of Hungary, for the first time in the history of the Hungarian labour movement worked out a comprehensive programme of agrarian reform entitled the New Land Reform, and made it public in the spring of 1926. In this programme it demanded the expropriation of large estates of over 100 *hold* and their free distribution to the landless. By 1926, branches of the new party were already functioning in nearly one hundred towns and villages.

The resurgence of the revolutionary workers' movement on such a large scale evoked savage attacks on the part of the government, which did everything it could to crush the movement. In the autumn of 1925, the police carried out sweeping arrests. They took into custody numerous leading members of the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers' Party whom they intended to try in a summary court, but in the end they had to yield before international protest and abandon

the summary proceedings. In the summer of 1926, Mátyás Rákosi and 52 of his associates were brought to trial, followed, in the autumn of 1927, by the trial of Zoltán Szántó and others.

As a consequence of the repeated arrests and other terrorist measures, from 1927 on it became impossible for the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party to function, and in 1928 it ceased to exist. Contacts between the underground organizations of the Communist Party were disrupted, and it was only with great difficulty that the party survived its losses.

Under the impact of the great depression that broke out at the end of the 1920s, however, new social tensions came to the surface and Hungary's political system was profoundly shaken.

## 2. THE GREAT DEPRESSION—ON THE ROAD TO WAR (1929–1939)

### Economic Crisis, Financial Difficulties, General Poverty

In October 1929, the stock market crash in New York signalled with catastrophic abruptness the end of the prosperity of the second half of the 1920s. The wave of falling prices, slowing production and other symptoms of economic crisis spread at breakneck speed from the advanced countries in the Western hemisphere to the more backward Eastern European countries. If the world economic crisis of 1929–33 evoked conflicts of unprecedented sharpness even in the most advanced countries, in the backward nations, among them Hungary, economic and social problems became even more acute.

In Hungary, the economy which was gradually stabilizing after the First World War relied essentially on two factors: the slow increase in industrial production, and the influx of foreign capital. The crisis shook these two pillars to their foundations. Industrial production dropped by 24 per cent, one-seventh of the factories ceased to operate, and nearly a third of the industrial workers lost their jobs. Without unemployment insurance or relief, they were plunged into abject poverty. And if it was still possible, to some extent, to counterbalance the drop of industrial production for two more years after 1929 by taking on ever larger foreign loans, the international financial and credit crisis of 1931 administered the *coup de grâce* to the Hungarian economy. By that time the country's indebtedness amounted to nearly 1,000 million dollars (this was equal to about one year's national income), a large part of which was made up of short-term credits. Following the financial collapse of the German banks and the Austrian Creditanstalt, one after another the foreign loans were recalled, and within a few months it became evident that the country's currency reserves were not sufficient to meet the claims from abroad. The largest credit institution, the Hungarian General Credit Bank, found itself on the verge of bankruptcy, and even the position of the National Bank, which had been established only a few years earlier with British financial aid, was shaken.

It was the agricultural crisis which rendered the country's precarious

situation catastrophic. In Hungary, a backward, primarily agrarian country with only relatively weak industry, where the major part of the population earned its livelihood in agriculture and the economy's contribution to the international economic bloodstream was primarily farm produce, agricultural prices and marketing possibilities decisively influenced the country's position. And it was above all agricultural prices that were affected by the crisis. The price of the most important farm product: wheat, dropped from 33 *pengő*s per quintal to 9 *pengő*s, and the price collapse of other important agricultural products was much the same. Hungary's foreign trade, which had been based earlier on the large volume of agricultural exports, was confronted with a serious situation because export possibilities dwindled to a minimum during the world economic crisis. Several million of unmarketable grain accumulated in the country. At the same time, however, because of the low prices, the agricultural sector was incapable of paying off the interest and principal on the nearly 2,000 million *pengő*s borrowed during the 1920s. Indebtedness and the increasing burden of taxes, with which the state administration endeavoured to cover the deficits which previously had been eased with foreign loans, brought about the ruin of thousands of peasants farming small plots of one to two hectares of land at the most. By that time the sales of property by auction were a part of everyday life in the villages. Yet the ruined landowning peasants were still in a better position than the over one million agricultural labourers and farmhands, who for the most part either did not find any work at all on the large estates, or if they did, worked for literally starvation wages and lived like animals. The sociological exploration of the countryside (the so-called 'village research') that was just beginning at that time painted a shocking picture of the poverty in the Hungarian villages: masses of people lived in mud huts; alongside the enormous surpluses of agricultural goods many went hungry; often they had to eat mushrooms and the grass in the fields; and sometimes they lacked even the most essential clothes.

There were serious economic problems among the middle strata of the population as well. Unemployment afflicted the intelligentsia severely. The majority of university graduates were unable to find work. Approximately 2,000 engineers and 2,500 teachers were without jobs. A whole army of intellectuals on relief work came into existence. They performed odd jobs, often shovelling snow to earn enough to keep body and soul together. With a loud publicity campaign to herald it, the government started a series of retraining courses to qualify them for other work. The majority of the intelligentsia who still had jobs after 1931 (state employees, for example) also found themselves suffer-

ing from difficult living conditions as the result of the various cuts in salaries.

The decline in the standard of living of a major part of the working population affected the handicraftsmen and small businessmen as well. Several thousand shopkeepers pulled down the blind for good. The incomes of nearly half the handicraftsmen did not even reach the pre-tax subsistence level in 1933.

### **The Fall of Bethlen.**

#### **The Károlyi Government**

The whole of Hungarian society seethed with dissatisfaction. Strikes grew more and more frequent, and on 1 September 1930 swelled into a mass demonstration that embraced the entire capital. On the morning of the demonstration, organized jointly by the legal Social Democratic Party and the underground Communist Party, more than a hundred thousand people streamed from the industrial quarters into the centre of Budapest to demand work and bread. Police on horseback and on foot attacked the workers, and only after clashes that lasted almost all day—resulting in hundreds of injured and several deaths—were they able to restore order.

An extensive wave of arrests and hastily proclaimed martial law, under which, despite international protests, two leaders of the underground Communist Party, Imre Sallai and Sándor Fürst, were sentenced to death and executed, were used to keep organized demonstrations of dissatisfaction within bounds. Nevertheless, the government was unable to restore the stability that had existed before the crisis. While the ignition point of the crisis lay in the dissatisfaction of the working class and the peasantry, the tension also spread to those sections of society upon which the political regime relied, and which were either the direct or indirect holders of state power.

Above all, the threefold political alliance of the big bourgeoisie, the class of large estate owners and the leading circles of the state apparatus, on which István Bethlen's governmental system was founded, was shaken. The economic difficulties brought the conflicts of interests to the surface. The big landowners felt that the crisis weighed more heavily upon them than upon the bourgeoisie and, since they were less able to shift the burdens of the crisis on to someone else, they saw the possibility of improving their lot only through a change in the government's economic policy. They therefore persistently demanded that the government should help agriculture with every means at its

command. Some went so far as to consider forming an anti-Bethlen political alliance with a few representatives of the wealthy peasantry who were opposed to the banks and the cartels. A significant manifestation of this dissatisfaction was the formation of the Smallholders' Party in the autumn of 1930 for the purpose of rallying the peasantry to oppose the government. The civil servants, whose fixed salaries had been cut, were apprehensive of a return to post-war conditions of poverty. They blamed the excessive economic influence of the capitalists, largely of Jewish origin, who still lived amidst better circumstances. Fearing for the firmness of state power because of the sharpening of social contradictions, they also became more and more alienated from the Bethlen government, which, after the outbreak of the financial and credit crisis, finally resigned.

But Bethlen's successor, Count Gyula Károlyi, the representative of the conservative aristocracy, did not wish to make any far-reaching changes even in the methods of government, let alone in its basic principles. At first it seemed that Bethlen was right in declaring after his resignation: 'I had to take myself out of circulation in order to be able to maintain the system I had built, and to preserve it for the transition.'

But the austerity measures aimed at improving the financial situation only intensified the dissatisfaction of the civil servants who constituted the main support of the government, without actually overcoming the real economic difficulties. The big landowners felt that economic policy was still being shaped to suit the interests mainly of the bourgeoisie, and the government found itself more and more isolated. There were other reasons for its growing isolation, among other things its failure to obtain a loan from France and to win France's support in the field of foreign policy.

#### **Gömbös's Attempt at Total Dictatorship**

As the economic situation continued to deteriorate, social tensions increased. The popularity of the opposition Smallholders' Party, even though it dissociated itself from all radical demands, spread through the villages with incredible speed. Thus, the idea of a strong government gained increasing support among the ruling circles, for whom repeated mass demonstrations of dissatisfaction at times conjured up the spectre of another revolution. 'We are moving swiftly towards the vortex,' wrote one of the typical representatives of the right wing, 'where only social questions dominate. At times like this the middle

parties become annihilated, even the United Party will succumb. The Christian Socialist Party is no weapon against the Marxists, for it has too much the sound of empty words. Thus a viable anti-Marxist party with a mass following *does not exist* here. What is to happen, then?... I feel that what is needed here is radical surgery.'

Ever wider circles held the view that the most suitable person to perform this radical surgery was Gyula Gömbös, the minister of defence. This former army officer began his political career in the counter-revolutionary detachments of 1919 and became one of the leading political figures during the white terror and in the following years. The Bethlen consolidation and liberalization drove him, as the leader of the extreme right, anti-semitic forces, into opposition for a time, but through rearmament and military preparations he again found a common language with Bethlen towards the end of the 1920s. First he was given the post of under secretary of defence, and then he became the minister of defence. Gömbös was popular with the staff officers and also with many civil servants and government officials. He was well known for his open opposition to the workers' movement, his animosity towards democratic and liberal ideas and his unbridled chauvinism. At the same time it was common knowledge that he planned to revive the leading role of the ruling classes if not the obsolete structure of Hungarian society as a whole. Gömbös, as an uncompromising advocate of arbitrary, totalitarian forms of government, and a herald of social and chauvinistic slogans, seemed well suited for the task of crushing the left-wing movements in such a manner that he would at the same time broaden the government's political basis among the middle strata of the population.

In October 1932, Gyula Gömbös was appointed prime minister. He went to work at once with great energy. He began with an avalanche of social and nationalistic demagoguery without precedent, using radio addresses and press statements. He drew up his National Work Plan, the notorious 'ninety-five points', in which he proclaimed the arrival of an 'age of reform' and the dawn of a 'new millennium'. He claimed that his ninety-five points, which included every promise possible: a land reform, a tax reform, a settlement of agricultural debts, cheap credits, agricultural markets, job opportunities, elections with secret ballot, etc., contained the panacea for the most painful ills of the masses.

But the demagogic, irresponsible promises served only as an instrument for achieving his real aims, the realization of a less concealed, total form of fascist rule free of parliamentary trappings. He disapproved of co-operation even with the opposition bourgeois parties.

Moreover, he wanted to put the working class under the control of fascist mass organizations by supplanting and banning the trade unions and the Social Democratic Party.

The Gömbös government's experiment in introducing a total fascist dictatorship was no isolated occurrence in Europe. It was only part of the forward thrust of fascism on an international scale, the most important result of which was the rise to power in Germany of Hitler and his National Socialist Party. With the support of the international forces of fascism, Gömbös made an effort to build a fascist party with a mass following. The leading role in this task was given to about 60,000 so-called 'vanguard fighters'. In order to spread fascism among the working class, a labour section of the government party was established. Gömbös set up a separate press and propaganda section, which, with the help of the newly founded cheap government newspapers (*Függetlenség*, *Új Magyarország*), poisoned public opinion from day to day with fascist propaganda.

The various clandestine and legal, fascist and national groups that were united in the Federation of Social Organizations (*Társadalmi Egyesületek Szövetsége* = TESZ) steadily increased their influence in the country's political affairs, and called for the founding of a broad fascist party. The state administration was completely amalgamated with the government party organization; the building of the party and the disseminating of propaganda were connected with the most diversified forms of terror and spying. An extensive network was set up for tapping telephone calls, secret censorship of correspondence and other forms of internal espionage. The officers corps of the army won ever growing influence in the country's politics.

Gömbös endeavoured to acquire a certain amount of influence also among the peasantry. Apart from his so-called farm protection measures, in which he guaranteed a three-year moratorium for certain peasant farms on the repayment of debts, he proclaimed a land reform policy, which was, in reality, little more than a rehash of the land reform demagoguery that had been quietly relegated to oblivion ten years earlier.

### Political Differences in the Ruling Circles

By this time, Gömbös's efforts to establish total dictatorship no longer evoked the unanimous enthusiasm of even those political circles that had seen in his person the key to the solution of political and economic crisis. By 1934, the economic situation had improved, and even if

social tension had abated only slightly, the danger of an explosion, it seemed, was no longer imminent. A gradual decrease in unemployment even improved the living conditions of the masses somewhat. Therefore, more and more of those who set the pace in political and economic affairs felt that it was unnecessary, and perhaps hazardous, to depart too much from the form of government created by Bethlen, and they also disapproved of Gömbös's peremptory and dictatorial ambitions. This conflict in views made its appearance also in personal differences between Bethlen and Gömhös which prejudiced the latter's position in conservative circles, but strengthened it in all those sections of the population who regarded any critical remarks he made of the aristocracy and the big capitalists as serious political objectives.

By the 1930s, social problems, such as the conditions in the villages, had given rise among the middle classes, especially the young intellectuals, to dissatisfaction with the existing political and social establishment. The need to effect certain improvements, to reform the obsolete Hungarian social structure, was voiced more and more frequently. Therefore, any suggestions for national reform, from whatever quarter or with whatever purpose they may have been made, always found a ready response amongst them. Following Hitler's rise to power, when international reactionary forces donned a revolutionary guise, the political left appeared sometimes to be a defender of the old bourgeois order. Therefore, the middle classes, reared in an atmosphere of extremely rabid chauvinistic propaganda since 1919, and even sections of the working class and agrarian proletariat cut off from the old working-class heritage, could be successfully influenced by social demagoguery.

Gömbös's social demagoguery was effectively supplemented by violence, wherever necessary. The elections of 1935, which were announced after the political split between Bethlen and Gömhös, went down in the annals of Hungarian history as the most notorious with regard to arbitrary action by the gendarmerie and the administrative authorities. In the village of Endrőd, in Békés County, for example, the gendarmes opened fire on the opposition voters, killing seven persons.

The elections resulted in a victory for Gömhös. In the government and in parliament, his own followers—former army officers from the gentry, state officials and civil servants who possessed enough land for a gentleman—gained a majority.

### Failure to Establish Totalitarian Fascism

There were many who expected a great deal from Gömbös's election triumph, and his success was interpreted in diverse ways. But it soon became evident that it could be interpreted in only one way, and that had nothing to do with social reforms. In his election speech at Szeged, Gömbös expounded his further aims: a single-party system, total dictatorship, a corporate state and the complete suppression of the workers' movement. In a discussion with Goering that same year he made it clear that a period of two years was the time he needed to realize his objectives.

But one after another his plans met with failure. His efforts towards liquidating the trade unions and the setting up of fascist workers' organizations did not yield success. Numerous major strikes in this period showed the influence of the trade unions and the rejection of the fascist corporate system as planned by Gömbös. The Hungarian variation of the corporate system introduced in Italy would have prohibited its members from engaging in wage struggles, would have appropriated the right to operate labour exchanges, and would have saddled the workers with a leadership appointed by the government. The trade union movement was reinforced by the activities in its defence of the underground Communist Party, which reduced the tension and often outright conflict between the Social Democratic and Communist workers.

Gömbös's land reform programme was soon revealed for what it was. Among its laws on land ownership was the entail law which was designed to introduce a Hungarian version of the Nazi peasant entail system, and naturally it little affected the landless or those with very small plots of land. As for the land settlement law, this measure earmarked only 8 per cent of the large estates (400,000 *hold* of land) for distribution, over 25 years, among 37,000 families.

The peasantry and the intellectuals who had longed for reforms soon awakened to the fact that Gömbös's reform policy was nothing more than a manoeuvre.

### German-Hungarian Rapprochement in Foreign Policy. The Darányi Government

In his foreign policy Gömhös sought to establish international fascist co-operation. Only a week after Hitler came to power Gömbös sent him a secret message asking him for co-operation. Then, on 16 June



1933, he was the first foreign statesman to visit Hitler in person. Their negotiations played an important role in laying the basis for an alliance between fascist Germany and Hungary. Close economic ties were also forged between the two countries, which were embodied in a treaty in 1934. Hitler and Gömbös had identical views on the most important issues in international affairs; thus Hitler promised to support the plans of the Hungarian government to revise the Hungarian-Czechoslovak frontiers. In the months immediately after the Nazis came to power, alliance with Germany became one of the decisive trends of Hungarian foreign policy and complemented the earlier policy of relying on Italian support for the revision of the Peace Treaty. But the Hungarian government still much needed the support of Italy, since Hitler, who wished to use Hungary as an instrument in carrying out the military plans of Nazi Germany, had not yet promised his support against Rumania and Yugoslavia. The Gömbös government proclaimed that it sought to revise the frontiers in the north with the help of Hitler, and the southern frontiers with the help of Mussolini. Therefore the Rome protocol signed in March 1934, in which the guiding principles of political and economic co-operation between Italy, Hungary and Austria were embodied in writing, was regarded as a considerable political success.

At first the Gömbös government viewed the Hungarian-Italian and Hungarian-German alliance as two complementary, mutually supporting and, if need be, two mutually counterbalancing foreign political ties. In 1934 and 1935, when relations became strained between Italy and Germany, the Gömbös government endeavoured to play the mediator. During 1935 and 1936 newer, important changes came about in German-Italian relations. The Italian attack on Abyssinia threw light on the controversies between Italy and the Western Powers in Africa. Italy found herself isolated and, aware of her weakness, sought closer links with Nazi Germany. In 1936 the Rome-Berlin axis came into existence, which made clear the ascendancy of the economically and militarily stronger Nazi Germany within the German-Italian alliance. Italy was compelled gradually to subordinate her aspirations in South-East Europe to German interests.

The Hungarian ruling circles welcomed the German-Italian agreement. They judged it as favourable to Hungarian aims, especially to their revisionist plans. However, as a consequence of the ascendancy of German fascism, the foreign policy of the Gömbös government became increasingly pro-German and subordinated to Hitler's will. It was during 1935-6 that Gömbös first agreed to Hitler's suggestion that he fit his revisionist plans in with the German aggressive military

strategy, and that he concentrate his forces primarily against Czechoslovakia.

Certain groups already criticized Gömbös's internal policy. The large estate owners were irritated by the social demagoguery, as a consequence of which 'the landed estate becomes the permanent target of every land-hungry nobody and pauper', while the entrepreneurs were concerned over the internal political effects of Gömbös's and Hitler's relationship. They also disapproved of the shift in foreign policy orientation to the side of Germany within the German-Italian alliance. The opposition of the government party and government circles found support within parliament among the Smallholders' and the Social Democratic Party, and they simultaneously attacked Gömbös's dictatorial attempts.

Gömbös's illness and his death in the autumn of 1936 prevented a violent clash. His successor, Kálmán Darányi, an obscure conservative, at first identified himself with the policy of the big landowners and capitalists: they wanted to return, as far as possible, to the more conservative governing methods of Bethlen. In foreign policy, although they regarded the German-Italian orientation as basic to their revisionist desires, they hoped to strengthen the alliance with Italy, as against Nazi Germany, whose aggressiveness had given rise to concern and fear in the conservative circles led by Bethlen.

At first the Darányi government followed this policy. For a short time, a few new developments in international affairs gave reason for the belief that the Western Powers would stand up to fascist aggression, which was steadily gaining in strength. The forming of the French popular front government and the strengthening of anti-fascist trends in other countries, warned the Hungarian government to proceed with caution. Thus, the relationship that Gömbös had built with Germany lost some of its intensity. Articles appeared in the German press attacking Hungarian foreign policy, and they voiced the grievances of the Germans (Swabians) in Hungary. An anti-government conspiracy was uncovered within the Hungarian militarist organizations, the origin of which was traced to the German legation. For its part, the Hungarian foreign ministry supported the idea of 'a horizontal axis' suggested by the Italians, with a somewhat anti-German edge; it would have linked Yugoslavia, Hungary and Poland together more closely under the leadership of Italy.

But all these aspirations were constantly frustrated by the main objective of Hungarian foreign policy, which was the revision of the Peace Treaty. At every critical point this aligned the leaders of Hungarian political affairs against the neighbouring countries and drove

them into the arms of a Germany that was the most likely country to upset the Versailles Peace Treaty. Italy's adherence to the Anti-Comintern Pact and Britain's policy of appeasement at the time of the Chamberlain government led the Hungarian government to the conclusion that co-operation with Germany would not necessarily antagonize the Western Powers. Therefore, when in November 1937 Hitler held out a glimmer of real prospects of a revisionist plan against Czechoslovakia, Darányi gave his consent to Hungary's participation in a scheme of aggression aimed at dismembering Czechoslovakia.

#### The Hungarian Nazi Parties. The Győr Programme

The renewed ascendancy of the pro-German line gave a strong impetus to the swing to the right in domestic policy as well. The extreme-rightist movements gained strength rapidly, and in the autumn of 1937 a Nazi-type Arrow-Cross movement came into existence. Its leader was Ferenc Szálasi, a retired staff officer. His meagre knowledge was mixed with confused ideas to produce his completely incoherent theories, united elements of German and Hungarian Nazism.

Darányi not only permitted the activities of the Arrow-Cross, but contrary to his earlier domestic policy—which had been characterized by a *approche*ment with the bourgeois opposition, the restriction of the right-wing followers of Gömbös, and the adoption of a few conservative motivated laws, such as the extension of the rights of the Upper House and the Regent—he became willing to turn government policy more vigorously to the right. Early in 1938, he promulgated two laws of great significance which were calculated to satisfy the German allies as well as the sections of Hungarian society that supported the right wing, particularly the staff officers and the middle class. The first consisted of a series of measures affecting the army, which became known as the 'Győr Programme'. An expenditure of 1,000 million pengős over a period of five years was planned to modernize the army. This was an organic part of the plan that had been worked out with the Germans against Czechoslovakia, but at the same time it satisfied a long-standing desire of the staff officers. The other law was the so-called first anti-Jewish law. This not only symbolized identification with Nazi Germany, but was equally intended to win over the army officers and the middle class, who, under the law, were entitled to fill the position vacated by the dismissed Jewish intelligentsia and civil servants.

#### The Underground Communist Party Calls for a Popular Front

The effects of the swing to the right in domestic policy were intensified by the *Anschluss*, the annexation of Austria, which took place on 13 March 1938. German troops were now stationed along the Hungarian frontier and Germany's strength and influence in South-East Europe had increased considerably. This presented an immediate threat to the country's political and economic independence. The magnitude of the danger was recognized first of all by the workers' movement. The underground Communist Party, following the policy worked out at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in the summer of 1935, centred its political work around the fight against fascism and war.

In their underground publications the Communists called for the unity of the anti-fascist forces, stressing that the foremost assignment of all progressive elements and parties was the protection of democratic rights. The resolutions passed in the summer of 1936 on the party's policy defined its most important tasks as follows: to fight for the protection and extension of democratic rights, enlisting 'every party, organization, group or individual that can be mobilized in the struggle against reaction and fascism, and for a Hungarian democratic republic', to fight for the preservation of peace, since it is only through 'co-operation with the peace-loving forces of Europe, only through overthrowing the fascist government that the Hungarian people can achieve a revision of the Trianon Treaty', to struggle for the protection of the workers' everyday interests and to fight for land reform. The Communist Party also pointed out the danger threatening the country's national independence from Nazi Germany. The rest of the left-wing parties, however, although protesting against full co-operation with the Germans and against the growing fascist tendencies in internal affairs, did not recognize the need for a popular front policy and held themselves firmly aloof from any kind of co-operation whatever with the underground Communist Party. The Social Democratic Party which could rely on the support of about 100,000 to 150,000 organized workers, belonged more to the right than to the left wing of the Second International. The Social Democratic Party was also reluctant to form any alliance with the Communists because in the anti-communist atmosphere under the Horthy regime any kind of co-operation with the underground revolutionary Communist Party would have exposed the leaders of the legal workers' movement to a danger that they were unwilling to face.

The leaders of the anti-German Smallholders' Party, which relied on the peasant masses and had swung to the left after 1935, continued,

however, to voice the primary importance of the national idea as against the internationalism of the working class; their political past and their attitudes linked them rather more with the opposition groups of the ruling classes. However true it might have been that an anti-fascist popular front could have strengthened those circles that wanted to alter Hungarian foreign policy, these circles were too much in dread of the internal political consequences of a possible popular front to be willing to co-operate even provisionally.

### The Imrédy Government Resorts to Intrigue

Instead of joining forces, the circles opposing a pro-German foreign policy resorted to intrigue. This was manifested in attempts to alter the composition of the government. The appointment of Béla Imrédy as prime minister after the fall of the Darányi government was, in essence, the result of these intrigues. Imrédy was an able financial expert. His years at the head of the National Bank ensured him the confidence of important financial circles, which was enhanced by his contacts with big business in the West, especially in Britain. He was known to be a devout Catholic, and therefore his appointment was viewed with favour by the clergy as well. But his undeniable talent and energy were combined with unbridled ambition. This had a decisive role in the development of his later career and took him ever closer to the ideals of fascism, which appeared to be forging triumphantly ahead.

Imrédy brought Darányi's proposed laws to a successful conclusion, but he also took steps to curb the Arrow-Cross demagogues. He even endeavoured to counteract the one-sidedness of the country's German-oriented foreign policy. In August 1938, when Horthy visited Germany, the Hungarian government did not undertake to participate unconditionally in Hitler's armed attack on Czechoslovakia. But simultaneously with ambiguous measures against the right, very firm regulations were promulgated against the workers' movement and other democratic forces. The reactionary law on the press, the repeated attacks on the trade unions (plans were worked out to nationalize them and then deprive them of the right to operate labour exchanges) and the setting up of forced labour camps under army control seriously weakened the left-wing and anti-German forces within the country.

### The Impact of the Munich Pact and the First Vienna Award

In the autumn of 1938, with the Munich Pact, Hitler succeeded in obtaining the consent of the Western Powers to the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. The Hungarian government recognized that this pact was tantamount to the acceptance of the leading role of Germany in East and South-East Europe. Hence, the alliance concluded with Germany against Czechoslovakia by no means endangered Hungary's relations with the Western countries. Therefore, in the interests of their revisionist political objectives, the Hungarian leaders again decided in favour of an all-out pro-German policy. This trend was given renewed impetus by the fact that on 2 November 1938, the Axis Powers decided, in the so-called First Vienna Award, to give the largely Hungarian-inhabited southern strip of Slovakia to Hungary. The territorial aggrandizement, accompanied by tremendous propaganda, was welcomed enthusiastically not only by the ruling circles, but also the middle-class sections, the petty bourgeoisie, and even the working class and the peasantry. For two decades the Horthy regime had disseminated propaganda through the schools, the pulpits and the press which linked every question to the need to revise the frontiers and saw the source of all troubles in a 'truncated Hungary'. The people were told repeatedly that the creation of a prosperous country lay in the restoration of 'Greater Hungary' and all this propaganda could not remain without effect on the masses. If we take into account the fact that at this time rearmament had also brought some improvement in the economic position of the working masses, then it is understandable that these events, at least temporarily, strengthened the internal stability of the Horthy regime and provided fertile soil for further chauvinistic demagoguery and war preparations. Munich, therefore, gave added impetus to Hungary's swing towards Hitler's Germany, since the Hungarian government had already made a promise in October that in the event of a favourable decision it would align the country's foreign policy completely with Germany.

The unconditional support of Germany was now Imrédy's policy, for he saw it as the best possible way for the realization of his own personal ambitions. 'The leading role of the Axis is assured for twenty-five years in Europe', said Count István Csáky, the new foreign minister. Therefore, the Hungarian government joined the Anti-Comintern Pact, and in May 1939 even withdrew from the League of Nations. Permission was granted for the formation of the Nazi *Volksbund* among the German-speaking minority in Hungary, and it was recognized as their official representative as part of the price of the Vienna Award.

The new laws on national defence (Military Service Law), which introduced compulsory defence work for all persons between 14 and 70 years of age, irrespective of sex, and authorized the government to curb still further the right of assembly, and to use its powers to invoke martial law and intern undesirable elements, were all an expression of the acceleration of war preparations.

The second anti-Jewish law introduced severe discrimination against Hungarian Jews on racial grounds, and deprived a great number of Jewish intellectuals and employees of a livelihood. With this law Imrédy wished to increase mass support for his policies; it was also intended as a gesture of friendship towards Nazi Germany.

### Pál Teleki and the 1939 Elections

Within these few months, therefore, Hungary drew ever closer to Germany, and in a few weeks took swift steps towards the realization of total fascism. All this was accompanied by the revival of old aspirations, not unanimously approved by the ruling classes, such as the so-called land reform, and the renewed attempt to form a fascist party of the masses in the form of the Hungarian Life Movement (*Magyar Élet Mozgalom*). These events, as well as the growing German economic demands that were prejudicial to the interests of Hungarian big business, caused certain more conservative groups of the Hungarian ruling classes again to pursue a more prudent course. They wanted to realize a more cautious policy through a change of government, so they brought about Imrédy's downfall, and appointed their old and trusted spokesman, Count Pál Teleki, as prime minister.

Pál Teleki, who had already played an active role in the years of the counter-revolution by helping to lay the foundations of the regime, had not engaged in politics for a long time. He pursued scholarly studies, and in the field of geography, where he used his findings with great zeal in the service of revisionist propaganda, he was a recognized authority. He was a cultured political figure with strong right-wing leanings and an aristocratic world outlook. Perhaps because of his conservative views and his unshakable faith in the leading role of the landowning classes, the demagogic political methods of German Nazism were alien to him. But it was precisely his preference for the historical aristocracy that deprived him of an effective means to combat Nazism: co-operation with the democratic and left-wing movements.

Fundamentally the new Teleki government continued the old political course. In the forefront of Teleki's foreign policy was the contin-

uation of the territorial revision. But at the same time this revision was conditional upon close co-operation with Germany. Therefore, in the spring of 1939, the Hungarian army joined in the liquidation of Czechoslovakia, by occupying the Sub-Carpathian territories inhabited by more than a half million almost entirely Ruthenian people. The new commitment stemming from this revision of the frontiers had a decisive influence on the policy of the Hungarian ruling circles. But Teleki combined this commitment with a more cautious political course, and sought to counterbalance the alliance with Germany and growing German pressure by strengthening Hungary's ties with Italy, reviving the idea of bringing about a 'horizontal axis', and by fostering closer relations with the Western Powers. Naturally Teleki's policy of 'two irons in the fire' did not, and could not, obstruct further German encroachment in Hungary. If he wanted to preserve the alliance with Germany, which he fully intended, then, as the consequence of the increased pressure, his government would be compelled to make ever more concessions to the Germans.

Teleki did not desire a change in domestic policy. It was under his government that parliament was asked to adopt the second anti-Jewish law. At the same time he promulgated measures against the Arrow-Cross, formally banning the movement and imprisoning a number of its leaders, including Szálasi; nevertheless, he tolerated the reorganization of the party a few weeks later under a different name, and even its large-scale activities in the May elections. In the course of the election campaign the government did almost nothing to curb the Arrow-Cross agitation, and in the sphere of propaganda there was practically no difference between the election slogans of the government party and those of the Arrow-Cross candidates. They equally attacked the liberal opposition and social democracy and censured both liberalism and Marxism. The elections were dominated by the extravagant slogans of the right and the extreme right. This situation was also reflected in the election results. Naturally the government party obtained a majority, and the overwhelming proportion of the government party deputies were extremist pro-German right-wingers. Under the impact of the rapid gains of fascism internationally it was not surprising that there was a swing to the right: this was, however, the first time in Hungarian elections that various right-wing parties were able to win such a significant number of votes, almost one million. On the eve of the war, the anti-fascist forces in Hungary, therefore, were not successful in bringing about a broad popular front, and the aspirations and ideas of German Nazism dominated the political, economic and cultural life of the country to an increasing extent.

### 3. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN HUNGARY BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

#### Slow and Uneven Growth in Industry and Stagnation in Agriculture

During the two decades that followed the First World War, the production of Hungarian industry exceeded the level of 1913, calculated on the basis of unchanged territory, by only 28 per cent. The rate of industrial expansion fell far behind that of the leading and even the smaller European countries. As a result of this slow development the gap between Hungary's economic and industrial progress and that of the advanced Western countries grew wider. On the eve of the Second World War, Hungary was still only an agrarian country in which a moderately developed industry was coupled with a backward agriculture burdened with vestiges of feudalism and struggling with serious difficulties.

#### *Production of Manufacturing Industry*

1913=100
1929=112
1932=184
1938=128

Yet, in this economically backward country one could find, at the same time, some of the most modern features of capitalist development. Although handicraft industry had a relatively great importance—as in underdeveloped countries generally—manufacturing was marked by a high degree of concentration. The major branches were monopolized by a few large concerns. Coal production, amounting to 900,000 tons per annum, was in the hands of two large mining concerns (Salgótarján Coal Mining Co. and Hungarian General Coal Mining Co.). About 100,000 tons of iron and steel were produced annually in the blast furnaces and foundries of the State Steel Works of Diósgyőr, the Rimamurány Iron Works at Ózd and the Manfred Weiss Works of Csepel in Budapest. The previously backward textile industry developed relatively fast between the two world wars. The discovery of hauxite deposits in Hungary meant that hauxite mining grew

rapidly, until it reached the figure of 500,000 tons a year before the Second World War, although there was practically no domestic aluminium industry. The crypton light bulbs manufactured by the United Incandescent Lamp and Electrical Appliances Factory made the electrotechnical industry competitive on the world market.

Manufacturing as a whole lagged far behind the requirements of a modern economy; nevertheless, a few special branches and the products of the Ganz factories reached international standards. This was also true of certain pharmaceutical goods from the Chinoin Factory. Light industry, whose development had been distorted within the framework of the Dual Monarchy, took a somewhat healthier course with the expansion of several of its branches; in the 1930s it produced two or three times as much as before the war, but even this was hardly enough to reduce the preponderance of the food industry.

#### *Machines and Labour in Manufacturing Industry*

	Horse power capacity in thousands	Number of workers in thousands
1913*	826	246.5
1929	1,330	299.9
1938	1,736	288.4

\* In post-war territory

There was some improvement, of course, in agriculture as well, in comparison with the years of the economic crisis. The country disposed of a tremendous surplus of agricultural produce (4-5 million

#### *Production of Main Crops in million quintals*

	1911-15	1934-38
Wheat	19.9	22.2
Rye	8	6.9
Barley	7.1	5.6
Oat	4.4	2.6
Maize	15.1	23
Potato	19.4	21.3

quintals annually), part of which was successfully marketed in Germany and Italy. But the basic contradiction remained unchanged, namely, the fact that huge agricultural surpluses were not the fruits of high productivity (the yield was around 10 quintals of produce per hectare), but accumulated at the cost of poverty in the Hungarian



villages and among the working population. Hungarian agriculture was marked by stagnation in technical development and mechanization, a considerable decline in the already low consumption of artificial fertilizers, and an almost total lack of new investments. The land in the hands of small peasants continued to dwindle, and the peasants lost even what little the post-war land reform had given them. The holdings of the several hundred thousand smallholders made up only 32 per cent of the country's land area, that is, about the same amount as that of the big landowners with over 1,000 *hold* of land.

*Distribution of Land  
1935*

	Holdings in percentage	Territory in percentage
0-5 <i>hold</i>	72.5	10.1
5-20	21.3	21.8
20-100	5.4	20.0
100-1,000	0.6	18.2
1,000-	0.2	29.9
	100.0	100.0

The increasing population of the countryside was unable to obtain new land and only a small fraction found jobs in industry. This resulted in the growth of a large army of unemployed. Between 1935 and 1938, an average of 120,000-130,000 agricultural workers were without jobs. This figure was increased by the army of 'dwarf' holders whose land was not enough to provide them with a livelihood. A day's wages in 1937, and even in 1938, when the prosperity due to rearmament was already affecting the countryside, were about one-quarter or one-third lower than before the depression. The position of the smallholders and the agricultural labourers indicated that in the 1930s Hungarian agriculture was incapable of providing a livelihood for an ever increasing section of the agrarian population.

*Composition of Foreign Trade*

	Import in percentage			Export in percentage		
	1913	1929	1937	1913	1929	1937
Raw material	25	37.5	42.5	52.0	59.9	58.8
Semi-products	13.3	22.5	30.6	10.0	6.9	10.6
Industrial products	61.7	40.0	26.9	37.8	33.2	30.6

### The System of Large Estates. Preponderance of Rural Population

Agriculture played a greater role than industry in the economy of Hungary, and the extent of the problems connected with agriculture was only increased by the fact that industry, owing to greater productivity, absorbed a smaller section of the population than might have been concluded from the division of the national income. Thus, according to the data of the 1930 national census, 4.5 million of the country's 8.7 million people derived their livelihood from agriculture. Naturally the term 'livelihood' was an extremely relative concept in this case. The 7,500 people whose property was greater than 100 *hold*, and who owned or leased close to one half of the country's land, were ensured a comfortable means of livelihood by just this glaring disproportion in the distribution of land ownership.

Among the landowners, the aristocracy with huge fortunes and vast incomes still continued to play a leading role, even if their numbers among the prominent politicians had decreased. But the power of the lower group of landowners grew to a far greater extent as a consequence of the positions they had won in state and political affairs. The majority of these politicians compensated for their gradually deteriorating material conditions and steadily shrinking property with an extremist, right-wing, chauvinistic, aggressive and anti-semitic policy. These owners of a thousand *hold*, '*ezerholdasok*', as they were referred to in Hungarian, virtually merged with the leading gentry in the state civil service and the officers corps; they had become completely divorced from their lands. This section of society believed in the omnipotence of state power and demanded that the repressive apparatus be strengthened in every sphere; they thus constituted the basis of the movement towards total fascism.

The peasantry, who were still the most significant class in Hungarian society numerically, were the principal victims of the economic and political power of the aristocracy, the landowners and the gentry. There did exist a small section within the peasantry which lived well in the shade of the big estates, but the smallholders for the most part found it very difficult to provide themselves with an adequate livelihood and to retain their lands; in most cases they existed near the poverty line. The great mass of the agricultural population, that is to say the 1.2 million 'dwarf' holders, the 600,000 agricultural labourers of the large estates and the 1.2 million landless day-labourers working on a day-to-day basis; 3 million people or a third of the country's inhabitants, lived in abject poverty.

This shocking picture of pauperism was revealed to the public by

the 'populist' writers in their works dealing with conditions in the Hungarian villages. In many countries Hungary was referred to as one of the larders of Europe: Hungarian wheat was sold in Italy, hogs and butter in Germany, poultry in Britain, fruit in Switzerland and sugar in India, at a time when in the Hungarian villages, in the words of the writer Gyula Illyés, 'they ate the mushrooms in the forest. And when there were no mushrooms the peasants went out to the sugar-beet fields of the landowners and stole the beet leaves for food.' Milk, sugar and fruit were luxuries in the Hungarian villages. In many places the adults could obtain no work, and the children were compelled to stay home from school for lack of proper clothing. It was stated in parliament: 'There are families... where four-year-old children do not know what shoes are because they have never worn them.'

Half the village dwellings were mud and adobe huts with earthen floor in which tuberculosis killed off 10,000-12,000 people annually. All these facts indicated that any kind of social change would have had to begin with the elimination of the inhuman conditions in the Hungarian villages and of the system of big estates in which they were rooted.

In Hungary monopoly capitalism preserved the rule of the large estate owners in the countryside, but the control of credits and industry was in the hands of finance capital, and since the influence of the banks extended beyond the boundaries of the towns, their role increased in agriculture as well. Particularly two large banks, and the big business families allied with them, wielded great power in economic and political life. The Credit Bank and the Commercial Bank controlled 60 per cent of Hungarian industry, and certain families (Vida, Kornfeld, the Weiss family of Csepel, Chorin, Dreher-Haggenmacher etc.) amassed fortunes that were considerable even when judged by international standards. These big business groups, which kept their hand on the pulse of the country's whole economic life, co-operated closely with foreign capital. This was very significant because, although its direct influence decreased, foreign capital and, especially after the *Anschluss* and the annexation of Czechoslovakia, German capital still played a considerable role in the country's economy.

The size of the working class increased, although not very rapidly owing to the slow industrial development, and with the peasantry constituted the other large class in Hungarian society. Manufacturing and the handicraft industries engaged 650,000 workers, and the total figure, with the addition of wage workers in other branches of economy such as communications, and the members of all their families, came to more than 2 million.

The position of the working class improved with the end of the economic crisis, yet in 1938 real earnings per worker were still about 10 per cent below those of 1929. In order to win over the working class to Hungarian fascism the government introduced a few social measures (the Hungarian government was among the last in Europe to establish the eight-hour working day, adopt a minimum wage law, and to provide family allowances for families with several children); nevertheless in the 1930s the material, social and cultural circumstances of the working class remained even below the average level for the 1920s.

Distribution of Population

	1920	%	1930	%	1941	%
Agriculture	4,449,104	55.7	4,499,393	51.8	4,534,000	48.7
Industry, mining	1,639,653	20.6	1,998,298	23	2,366,138	25.4
Trade, transport	763,146	9.5	807,934	9.3	892,377	9.5
Other	1,128,240	14.2	1,382,694	15.9	1,523,325	16.4
Total	7,980,143	100.0	8,688,319	100.0	9,320,820	100.0

### Culture and Education

Between the two world wars the world-wide development of productive forces, electric power, the internal combustion engine and the modern forms of communication brought a number of changes in the way of life of the population of the European countries. But these changes appeared to a far lesser extent in Hungary than in the more advanced countries and they did not reach large masses of the population at all. The spread of electric lighting made the life of the vast majority of city inhabitants more pleasant, but two-thirds of the villages were still without electricity at the outbreak of the Second World War. It was in these years that such an important instrument for the dissemination of culture as the radio began to come into general use; but in Hungary, owing to the poverty of the working masses, many could not afford to buy one. There were about 400,000 radio sets, which meant that only about one-fifth or one-sixth of the country's

inhabitants could listen to the radio. In the years following the First World War, and especially after the appearance of sound films, the cinema became one of the most important media of mass entertainment. But the majority of villages in Hungary—primarily as the consequence of a lack of electric power—were excluded from enjoying it. That going to the cinema in Hungary was a luxury is eloquently demonstrated by the fact that the country's adult population saw a film on average about three times a year. The motorcar made its appearance during this period. In Budapest the fiacre was replaced by the taxi, and private cars became popular among the wealthy classes, but among the vast majority of the population even the bicycle spread very slowly.

The limiting and shortening of the working day by law encouraged the development of new popular forms of mass entertainment for the increased leisure time in the countries of Europe. The bathing beach, tourism and a great diversity of sports became familiar forms of recreation between the two world wars. A more modern and cultured way of life, and the requirements of technical progress, made the raising of the educational standard of the masses necessary all over the world. In Hungary this requirement was embodied primarily in a slight expansion of the educational system, the establishment of schools in the farmsteads and a more stringent application of the principle of compulsory elementary education. But all this was far too little to make any change in the general cultural backwardness. Nearly a million people over the age of six were not able to read or write. The elimination of illiteracy made little progress. The children of peasant and working-class families were able to finish four or, at most, six grades of primary school. If they wanted to continue their studies they had to struggle against the whole educational system, which in itself guaranteed the preservation of a monopoly of culture for the higher strata. The higher elementary school, for example, was for most children a blind alley, cutting off access to any further schooling; from this type of school, entrance to the 'gymnasium', or secondary school, which was a prerequisite for the university, was extremely difficult. Thus only 4 per cent of the gymnasium students came from the families of workers and peasants, and in the colleges and universities the figure was only 3.5 per cent.

The cultural and educational policy of the Horthy regime was extremely conservative. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences, which in this period was becoming ever more insignificant, had lost contact with the progress of the humanities and sciences. Gradually it became dominated by a spirit of sterile political and scholarly conservatism

divorced from life. The official cultural policy supported only the mediocre, conservative, religious and nationalistic artists who catered to the taste of the gentry. Writers like Ferenc Herczeg, Cecile Tormay, Irén Gulácsy and Zsolt Harsányi completely neglected essential social and artistic themes. The most talented artists, who produced the most enduring works, were not to be found among the official artistic circles that enjoyed the government's support. The great artists of the period did not wish to serve the regime and expressed their opposition to fascism by retreating into an ivory tower and withdrawing from the period's oppressive political and ideological atmosphere. A smaller, but more significant, section of them reached, sometimes by a circuitous route, the period's most progressive revolutionary socialist ideology and artistic forms. The former group in literature was represented primarily by the writers associated with the periodical *Nyugat* (The West). This journal, an outstanding example of the democratic literary trend of the beginning of the century, had lost a great deal of its militancy and freshness by the time the Horthy regime came into existence. But even then the *Nyugat* circle of writers achieved a very high literary standard; they represented a European culture and in general adopted a humanistic standpoint. Among its leading figures were Mihály Babits, Gyula Juhász, Frigyes Karinthy, Dezső Kosztolányi, Árpád Tóth, and especially Zsigmond Móricz, who progressed the furthest in his writings towards a critical and realistic portrayal of Hungarian society, particularly of peasant society. The most worthwhile representatives of this school had reached the height of their powers before the First World War.

Part of the newer generation definitely began to deal with those problems of Hungarian society that were particularly obvious to all. The 'populist' writers already mentioned, described the glaring poverty of the peasantry and voiced their demands. Although their views contained a good many nationalistic features, and they underestimated the role of the working class in their one-sided preoccupation with the peasantry, they sought for a 'third course' between socialism and capitalism, and on the whole they strengthened the democratic and anti-fascist forces with their enduring artistic works. Among these the most significant were the sociological works and poetry of Gyula Illyés, the novels of László Németh and the writings of József Darvas and Péter Veres.

The crushing of the Soviet Republic in 1919 compelled some of the revolutionary writers to go into exile. A main current of Hungarian literature, connected with the workers' movement, was founded by them. In the writings of these literary figures—Aladár Komjádi, Andor

Gábor, Béla Balázs, Béla Illés, Antal Hidas and Sándor Gergely—the problems of Hungarian social development were raised in a revolutionary manner, from the standpoint of the class struggle, and were linked with the idea of the battle against fascism. But a new generation of revolutionary writers emerged within Hungary also, primarily during the 1930s. Their most significant representative, Attila József, drew his experiences from the working class. His vigorous lyricism, new in its content and form, voiced the social and political problems of the Horthy era most clearly. It was in his poetry that the voice of the working class was heard in its full force in Hungarian literature for the first time. He was a poet who had at the same time progressed to the ideology of Marxism and who had joined the underground Communist Party, where he took an active share in its everyday struggles. His works achieved particularly great value by the fact that their ideological content found expression in the most modern artistic forms. This made him one of the most significant poets of the Europe of his time.

The strength of this literary trend was hallmarked not only by the life-work of Attila József, but also by the lyrical poetry of Miklós Radnóti, who felt the inhumanity of fascism and war more profoundly than anyone else, and in the novels and short stories of Lajos Nagy, which painted a shocking panorama of the social life of the counter-revolutionary regime.

In the other spheres of art also, the greatest artistic personalities opposed the official trends hacked by the government. The music of Zoltán Kodály, and even more, the works of Béla Bartók, who was forced into exile by fascism, drew upon the rich heritage of folk music and expressed the emotional world and thought of the twentieth century. In painting, Gyula Derkovits, with the new forms he established, and in sculpture, Ferenc Medgyessy and Béni Ferenczy, using modern means of expression even though drawing from traditional sources, represented the most progressive trends. Enduring art was also created by prominent figures of other schools, such as the painters István Csók, István Szőnyi and Aurél Bernáth, and the sculptors Pál Pátzay and Zsigmond Kisfaludi Strobl.

The period's finest artists made great sacrifices and opposed the official cultural policy and the dehumanized world of inter-war Hungary. More than one of them suffered a tragic fate and either directly or indirectly became a victim of fascism. Even greater was the number of young artists with promising talent who refused to give up their artistic and political principles, and whose budding careers were broken by fascism and war.

#### 4. HUNGARY IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

##### *The Outbreak of the War*

In the second half of the 1930s, war clouds thickened over Europe. Germany and Italy, the two fascist great powers, precipitated ever more dangerous crises and conflicts. In another part of the world, Japan joined the fascist march of aggression. A great contribution to the military and diplomatic successes of the fascist bloc was made by the division of the left-wing and democratic forces and by the policy of 'non-intervention' of the Western Powers; they sought to appease Hitler with ever newer concessions. The Munich Pact, the culmination of this policy, failed to halt and even encouraged German aggression.

On 1 September 1939, Hitler's armies invaded Poland. A few days later Britain and France declared war on Germany. The Second World War had begun.

Teleki's government did not wish to join Germany in this conflict. Poland, the victim of German aggression, was Hungary's ally, and the fact that Hitler was now at war with the Western Powers, instead of the Soviet Union, also roused mixed feelings among Hungarian political leaders. As early as the end of July, the Teleki government informed Hitler in a letter that, although it was on the side of the Axis Powers in every respect, it did not wish to be party to the attack on Poland. Although two weeks later, on German insistence, the letter was declared as never having been written, Hitler stated at his talks with the Hungarian foreign minister, Count Csáky, in Salzburg that he did not even require Hungary's military assistance. His wish was only that Hungary should not declare herself neutral and the Hungarian government agreed to this.

##### *Teleki's Foreign Policy*

Teleki did not depart from the policy even when the Germans requested permission to send their troops through Hungarian territory in order to attack Poland from the rear. The Hungarian government

refused to comply with this request as it could rely on Mussolini's support in this instance. But this refusal did not severely strain Hungarian-German relations because the Polish army was only able to resist the German war machine for 17 days. More than 150,000 Polish refugees, both military and civilian, sought and found asylum in Hungary. By granting asylum to the Polish soldiers, the Teleki government was not only complying with the Hungarian public sentiment of friendship with Poland, but was also demonstrating its policy, which aimed to preserve the alliance with Germany while maintaining friendly relations with the Western Powers. It wanted to manoeuvre between the two belligerent factions. This policy was supported even by those circles of the ruling classes which had earlier had some reservations with regard to German expansionist policy. These circles now advanced the idea of a 'strong Hungarian empire', that is to say, the restoration of the pre-1918 frontiers, the so-called Kingdom of St. Stephen. At the same time, they did not want Hungary to become a vassal state of Germany and lose its independence. This idea had a twofold meaning in domestic policy as well: it expressed an adherence to conservative Hungarian ideals, in opposition to the new conception of national socialism, and even more to left-wing views. In response to these ideas the Teleki government curbed democratic rights even more. It used the pretext of the war to revoke a number of social achievements and to appoint government commissioners to head and control the trade unions.

#### **Differences between Rumania and Hungary**

In the spring of 1940, the country's political life was dominated by the impact of Nazi Germany's great victories in Western Europe. The overwhelming of Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and France within a few weeks gave rise to the belief that the German army was invincible, and within the Arrow-Cross Party and the right wing of the government party, as well as in the General Staff, the supporters of the idea of entering the war began to gain strength. Teleki, relying on the pro-British circles of the ruling class, rejected this demand and argued that 'it is still not certain that Germany will win, and just for this reason it is not expedient that we give her our full and enthusiastic support'. Moreover, he wished to concentrate the government's efforts in foreign policy on the realization of those aims for which he would enjoy not only the united backing of the ruling class but also the sympathies of other sections of the population. There-

fore, from the spring of 1940, he raised territorial demands with respect to Rumania more and more urgently. In fact, on 1 July 1940, after Rumania was compelled to give up the territories she took from Soviet Russia in 1918, he began the mobilization and deployment of Hungarian troops along the Rumanian frontier. The Germans were opposed to the Hungarian actions. At first they argued that a possible Rumanian-Hungarian conflict, in view of Britain's guarantees of the inviolability of Rumania's borders, would offer an excuse for the British to make a landing in the Balkans, threatening the oil supplies for the fascist military machine from Rumania. But by 1 July the position had already changed; Rumania had renounced the British guarantees and had openly sided with the Axis Powers. Thus the German government again could not afford to allow an armed solution of the differences.

#### **The Second Vienna Award and Its Consequences**

The Rumanian government then asked for a decision by an arbitration court of the Axis Powers regarding Hungarian territorial claims. The Hungarian government consented to this, although not willingly, because Teleki saw that the Germans did not wish to satisfy Hungary's claims completely. On 30 August, the Second Vienna Award gave Hungary 43,000 square kilometres (about 17,000 sq. miles) of territory with 2.5 million inhabitants (among them more than a million Rumanians), which satisfied two-thirds of Hungary's claims. The Second Vienna Award, of course, did not put an end to the differences between the Rumanian and Hungarian governments over the question of Transylvania. But then this was not its purpose. Hitler's aim was not to blunt the edge of the dissension, but perpetuate it. The demarcation of the frontiers and the persecution of national minorities, which assumed brutal forms in both countries, helped to maintain the tension and forced both governments to seek the realization of their interests through a tighter alliance with German Nazism, by serving and supporting the German government. This became the dominant trend from the autumn of 1940 on, in the Hungarian government's foreign and domestic policy alike.

Teleki saw clearly that the Second Vienna Award would have a high price. It was clear that he would have to draw the lines of his policy with less ambiguity and make considerable concessions to Germany.

The Vienna Award itself contained separate provisions regarding the rights of the German ethnic group in Hungary. The most signif-



icant of these was that the *Volksbund* was recognized as the sole party representing the German minority in Hungary; this assured them rights that no other political party enjoyed in Hungary. As far as the other measures were concerned, the Germans soon made their wishes known to the government through Döme Sztójay, the Hungarian minister in Berlin. These were concerned both with economic and political affairs. In the economic sphere, Hungary was to integrate more fully in the new European economic order envisaged by the Germans. This was the purpose of the agreement concluded on 10 October 1940, according to which Hungarian agricultural production was to be linked even more closely with German requirements.

### The Upsurge of the Extreme Right Wing

On the domestic political scene, the remission of the Arrow-Cross Party leader Szálasi's remaining prison sentence, and the retraction of Decree No. 3400, which until then had prohibited civil servants from joining the Arrow-Cross Party, opened the gate to the extreme right wing. The Arrow-Cross movement, which in recent months had appeared to be weakening and breaking up into factions, revived again and under Szálasi's leadership united into a party numbering some 300,000 members. It proclaimed its foreign political programme, which was aimed at conformity with the 'new order to be established by the Axis Powers'.

Within the government party, the pro-German groups also gained strength. Although Teleki fulfilled numerous German demands and even proclaimed the third anti-Jewish law, a group of parliamentary deputies, led by Béla Imrédy, withdrew from the government party in October 1940, and formed the Party of Hungarian Revival (*Magyar Megújulás Pártja*) with an almost completely 'national socialist' platform.

### Joining the Tripartite Pact. 'Eternal Friendship' with Yugoslavia, Followed by an Attack against Her

The culmination of this swing to the right came when the government, casting aside the cautious foreign policy line it had pursued up till then, joined the German-led war bloc. It was at this time that this bloc acquired a more stable form when the representatives of Germany,

Italy and Japan signed the Tripartite Pact on 27 September 1940 in Berlin. More people became convinced that after the war Germany would play a decisive role in South-Eastern Europe in every respect and that Hungarian foreign political aspirations could be realized best by subordinating them to German foreign policy. In one of his speeches, Foreign Minister Csáky formulated this opinion in the statement that Hungary wished to fill the role of *primus inter pares* in this region of Europe, and did not consider a further curtailment of the country's national independence too dear a price to pay.

The Hungarian government, therefore, took steps to be the first to adhere to the Tripartite Pact. The Germans gave their consent after the Hungarian government had agreed to allow the German troops occupying Rumania to pass through Hungary. On 20 November 1940, Hungary signed the Tripartite Pact, but only shortly before Slovakia and Rumania. The dream of a privileged position, the misty vision of a status of *primus inter pares*, was quickly dispelled, and there remained only the obligations stemming from the Pact.

These obligations first became apparent in the spring of 1941, when Hitler decided to seize Yugoslavia by force after internal factions had overthrown the pro-German government there. Looking for a partner in his undertaking, Hitler dangled the picture of a new revision of Hungary's frontiers before Horthy's eyes. The Hungarian government then found itself in an awkward position. Only a few months earlier Teleki, who did not want to break off all relations with the West, had sought a *rapprochement* with Yugoslavia, with whom his government had been on rather poor terms in the past. The *rapprochement* had been made easier by the fact that it was not opposed by the Germans, who had expected the pro-German Yugoslav government to become a party to the Tripartite Pact. Under these circumstances, in December 1940, the two governments had concluded a Treaty of Eternal Friendship, which they solemnly embodied in law in February 1941. In the spring of 1941, therefore, the government had to choose between violating this treaty and missing an opportunity of revising the frontiers. Horthy decided on the former, and he let Hitler know that he was ready to participate in military operations against Yugoslavia.

But opinion was not unanimous on this question in Hungarian ruling circles. In Teleki's view the attack on Yugoslavia, besides violating the recently concluded Treaty of Eternal Friendship, would put an end once and for all to the possibility of a more flexible foreign policy aimed at fostering relations with the Western Powers, while maintaining the fundamental alliance with the Germans. If Hungary attacked Yugoslavia she would end her status as a non-belligerent,

which in Teleki's opinion was most undesirable since he felt the outcome of the war was doubtful. Nevertheless, neither the Teleki government, nor Pál Teleki himself, was averse to carrying out the attack on the side of Hitler, when it held out the prospect of a further revision leading to territorial aggrandizement. Teleki was in favour of the move, provided the approval of the Western Powers could be ensured, and a suitable form found.

On 30 March, at the meeting of the Council of Ministers, the conditions were worked out under which they would go to war. They also found legal justification for breaking the inconvenient Treaty of Eternal Friendship; they set as one of the decisive conditions for their intervention the disintegration of the Yugoslav state, which would then render the treaty automatically invalid. At the same time, they sent secret messages to London and Washington in which they endeavoured to explain the necessity for Hungarian intervention in the event of a German attack on Yugoslavia, and their hope for approval of their action. But, without waiting for the replies from the West, on 1 April, the Supreme Defence Council with the participation of Prime Minister Teleki, accepted the joint plan of the two general staffs for the attack. The following evening the British reply arrived.

#### Teleki Commits Suicide.

#### The Bárdossy Government Takes Over

The British government did not accept Teleki's arguments and made it clear that if German troops attacked Yugoslavia from Hungarian territory Britain would break off diplomatic relations with Hungary, and the active participation of Hungarian troops in the attack would constitute a *casus belli*. Teleki felt that the circle had closed. Horthy, the General Staff, the government and a considerable part of the government party were for going ahead with the attack, while a denial of the German request would have been an anti-German move, which Teleki did not dare to make. The policy of 'two irons in the fire' had failed. Not even he was able to escape the nightmare caused by his desire to revise the frontiers; only now did he see how this concept of which he had been an enthusiastic propagator was in reality turning against Hungary and sweeping her toward the road of an unconditional pro-German policy. Teleki had ever fewer doubts about its catastrophic consequences. If he was unable to avert the catastrophe, he did at least want to avoid its association with his name. During the night of 2 April, Teleki ended his own life.

The next day, as Horthy was appointing László Bárdossy to succeed the dead prime minister, the German troops, sent to carry out the attack against Yugoslavia, reached Budapest.

Teleki's death, although his suicide was meant to serve as a warning, did not alter the course of events. When, a few days after the launching of the German attack on Yugoslavia, a few Croatian Ustashi in German-occupied territory proclaimed an independent Croatian state, the Hungarian government declared the Treaty of Eternal Friendship invalid, and on 11 April sent its own troops into the attack. Meeting little resistance, the troops were able to occupy the Bácska and several other regions south of Hungary within a few days. Nevertheless Hitler did not give back to Hungary the Bánát, a focal point of Hungarian territorial claims, but, contrary to his earlier promises, kept it directly under German administration.

The circles closest to the government were already aware by this time, or at least sensed, that the Balkan war was merely a prelude to Hitler's grand scheme, the Barbarossa plan, the lightning assault on the Soviet Union. The Germans, of course, did not discuss this officially with the Hungarian government, but the Chief of the Hungarian General Staff and the Hungarian envoy in Berlin constantly sent information on the impending attack and demanded that the Hungarian government voluntarily offer, in advance, to participate in the war against the Soviet Union. This, they argued, would increase the capital which 'we have accumulated in Hungarian-German friendly relations' and which 'will pay dividends' so that 'we shall retain our priority... which we have claimed until now as the leading friend of Germany in Central Europe'. But the government did not decide to act until 22 June 1941, when German troops invaded the Soviet Union. Hitler informed Horthy of his decision in a letter, which—as the German envoy in Budapest reported—'the old champion of the struggle against Bolshevism welcomed with jubilation'. The Hungarian government, since Hitler did not request the participation of Hungarian troops, decided only to sever diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

#### Declaration of War on the Soviet Union

But the attitude of government circles soon changed. The General Staff, having received intimations from leaders of the Wehrmacht that they would be pleased by Hungary's entry into the war, exerted ever increasing pressure on the government. The government, whose

anti-Soviet political attitude was well known, felt concern over the fact that the neighbouring countries, such as Rumania and Slovakia, had already sent troops to the Soviet front; there were fears that Hungary's stock would depreciate in the eyes of the German leaders. Under these circumstances the government was increasingly inclined to join in the attack, even though in the meantime Prime Minister Bárdossy had received Molotov's warning, in which the Soviet foreign minister had recommended that Hungary remain neutral. The government circles had no doubts about the success of the German invasion; the minister of defence reckoned that the campaign would last about six weeks. All that was needed was a pretext, because Hungary had no territorial claims on the Soviet Union, only on other states that had joined the attack against the USSR. With the co-operation of the German and Hungarian General Staffs a pretext was soon manufactured. On 26 June, the General Staff reported that three Soviet aircraft had bombed Kassa. After that Bárdossy and Horthy acted quickly—according to Bárdossy, within five minutes. Horthy, who declared that 'I could never bear the shame if we did not take part in this war', authorized the prime minister to submit the declaration of war to the Council of Ministers. Hardly 80 minutes had elapsed after the bombing of Kassa, and the Council of Ministers was already in session. Bárdossy submitted his proposal for a declaration of war. Although a few of the ministers had some misgivings, they were dispelled and the Council of Ministers approved the proposal. Although directly after the meeting of the Council of Ministers the report of the commander of the Kassa air units arrived, according to which the planes that bombed the town were German, this fact did not alter Bárdossy's decision. That very afternoon he communicated it to the German government.

The press that evening published the news of the bombing of Kassa, and, contrary to the commander's report, put the blame on Soviet aircraft. This set the atmosphere for the meeting of parliament the next day. On 27 June, at 10.30 a.m., after the Speaker had opened the session, Prime Minister Bárdossy took the floor and said the following:

'Honourable members! I should like to make a very brief announcement. The Speaker of the House has used fitting words to condemn the unspeakable Soviet attack as a violation of international law. The Hungarian Royal Government declares that as the consequence of these attacks, a state of war exists between Hungary and the Soviet Union.'

That very hour Hungarian aircraft bombed Soviet towns and the Hungarian army invaded Soviet territory.

### **The Economy Geared to the Needs of the German War Machine**

The successes of the German army on the Russian front at first appeared to bear out the forecast of Hungarian government circles: the Soviet army, like those of the rest of the countries of Europe, would collapse relatively rapidly under the blows of the German war machine. Thus, entry into the war held forth a promise of quick successes, without heavy sacrifices. The actual number of Hungarian troops sent to the front was only about 35,000–40,000 altogether, and Hungary contributed to the common war effort primarily by satisfying German economic demands.

The conversion of the economy to a war footing was begun in the summer of 1938, with the launching of the Győr Programme, but was completed only in 1941, after the start of the war against the Soviet Union. During the course of the war the country's economic life was geared more and more to satisfying the requirements of the German war economy. These requirements, in accordance with tradition, lay above all in the sphere of agriculture. The obligatory exports of grains, oil-producing seeds and surpluses of maize amounted to several million quintals. Several hundred thousand head of cattle, sheep and pigs went to Germany annually. In 1941, for example, the Hungarian government undertook to deliver the entire agricultural surplus of the newly regained Bácska region to Germany and Italy. The German government generally understood 'surplus' to mean what was left after food quotas in Hungary were reduced to a minimum. This was how the preposterous situation came about during the war that the per capita food rations were smaller in Hungary than in Germany. The Hungarian government, in order to meet its commitments with regard to Germany, even tightened up the compulsory delivery system.

Hungarian agriculture, however, owing to the low yields and backward farming methods, found it increasingly difficult to meet the steadily growing German and domestic requirements. The earlier tremendous surpluses had existed primarily because of the extremely low internal consumption and exporting difficulties. Now internal consumption increased, primarily because of the needs of the army, and there was not only a market demand for exports, but also compulsory deliveries. Agriculture, however, was incapable of stepping up production to meet these new demands, for it was impossible to increase mechanization and the use of chemical fertilizers, and livestock herds kept declining as a consequence of exports. The inadequacy of Hungarian agricultural production became more and more obvious in the final years of the war, and there were serious food supply problems

in the country. At the same time, exports to Germany remained below the quotas desired by the Germans.

During the war against the Soviet Union the German war machine also enlisted Hungarian industrial capacity in its service. The German military command drew Hungarian armaments factories into its supply scheme, within which they were to help provide the German army with ammunition and light arms, and, as part of the joint aircraft production programme, the Germans supported the expansion of the Hungarian aircraft manufacturing industry. The German military command made increasing demands on Hungarian raw materials of strategic importance. More than half of the production of the rapidly developing Hungarian oil industry, which by 1943 was turning out close to 850,000 tons, and nearly 90 per cent of the 1,000,000 tons of bauxite that the tremendous Hungarian resources yielded, were sent to Germany.

A new feature that made its appearance during the war was the promotion of the construction of the Hungarian war industry by the Germans, who had earlier done everything in their power to obstruct Hungary's industrial growth.

German and Hungarian military requirements resulted in a considerable expansion, primarily in the sphere of heavy industry. But the approximately 30 per cent rise in the output of coal, iron and steel was less and less able to satisfy the requirements of industry, where production had nearly tripled as a consequence of the manufacture of aircraft, tanks, military transport vehicles and armaments. No less than 120,000 new workers were employed in manufacturing industry, where the value of production had increased by 37 per cent by 1943. But the branches of industry turning out consumer goods, owing to shortages of raw materials and labour as well as war-time restrictions, were only able to use part of their capacity, and their production dropped by 25 per cent below the pre-war level.

### Inflation

The building of the war industry was financed to a great extent by means of inflation. The war expenditures of the state, which amounted to 21,000 million *pengő*s in five years, could only be financed by issuing increasing volumes of paper bank-notes without security. Hungarian war expenditure was increased substantially by the fact that Germany kept paying for an ever increasing amount of the goods delivered, and by that time 75 per cent of Hungary's foreign trade was conducted

with Germany. But the Germans regarded these shipments of goods as Hungary's 'contribution to the common war'. Thus in 1941 they were 326 million *pengő*s in arrears, and in 1944, calculating also the cost to the Hungarian government of the German occupation of Hungary after 19 March 1944, they owed 2,900 million *pengő*s. Moreover, since the Hungarian state paid the manufacturers and the landowners for the goods that were exported, this also contributed to the huge increase in unbacked paper money. The volume of currency in circulation grew rapidly from 863 million *pengő*s in 1938 to 12,200 million *pengő*s in 1944. About 42 per cent of the increase in the output of bank-notes was meant to cover the German debts; thus growing inflation was caused to a great extent by Hungary's ever increasing economic and political dependence on Nazi Germany, which made possible German expropriation of part of Hungary's national income.

### The Situation of the Workers and Peasants

The growth in industrial production considerably increased the size of the working class. More than 450,000 people were employed in manufacturing, and nearly 400,000 were engaged in handicrafts within the territory of Hungary as of 1939. Unemployment was ended to a large extent since the army had recruited several hundred thousand young workers. Temporarily, this fact had a favourable effect on the position of the working class. As a consequence of the demand for labour, wages increased between 1938 and 1940, and this led to an improvement in living conditions. Later, however, the cost of living and the rise in prices exceeded the increase in wages. Thus the real wages per worker slowly declined from 1940 on, and in 1943 fell to 15 to 20 per cent below the level for 1938.

As a consequence of rationing and the black market, the workers were unable to obtain even the most necessary foods, despite their wage increase. At the same time, some of the earlier social benefit laws were suspended and in many factories the working day was again increased to 10 to 12 hours.

Within the munitions factories the oppression of workers assumed ruthless forms. The workers were not permitted to give notice, nor to leave their place of work. If they attempted to protest against their low wages or poor conditions they faced prison, internment, or military conscription and service at the front. The military commanders appointed to direct the factories kept the workers under constant surveillance and terror, and compelled them to work ever harder.

In addition to oppression by the military authorities, circles close to the government endeavoured to divest the workers of every means of self-defence. For this purpose they constantly demanded that the trade unions be dissolved, and that they be replaced by fascist workers' boards. The constantly increasing terrorism of the military authorities throughout the war years was supplemented by the extremist, nationalistic fascist demagoguery which was aimed at deceiving and winning over the working class.

Unemployment also dropped considerably among the agricultural workers, and this was reflected in the rise in wages. But the government soon intervened in the interests of the landowners. Alluding to the requirements of national defence, the government made regulations restricting the freedom of many of the agricultural labourers on the large estates to change their jobs and preventing any significant increase in earnings by freezing wages.

The war prosperity improved the material position of the working peasantry only in the early years. The system of compulsory deliveries of produce introduced in 1940, and later, the requisitioning system linked with the name of Béla Jurcsek, the minister of food, largely deprived the peasantry of their surplus grains, and thus made it impossible for them to use the rising grain prices to improve their economic position. The military requisitioning, military service and continuous harassment turned a considerable part of the peasantry against the war.

#### **Worsening of Political Oppression. The Massacre of Újvidék**

Prime Minister Bárdossy had risen high on the regime's social ladder as a career diplomat. Without a doubt his personal qualities played a role in his rapid rise. A high degree of intellectual arrogance, impulsiveness, presumption, cynical rashness and importunity were his chief traits. His world outlook was marked by an approval of the almost caste-like social structure of Hungary, nationalism, and an abiding faith in the leading role of the Hungarian ruling classes in the Danube valley. Ideologically he was not particularly close to the Nazis, but his foreign policy was based on the assumption that the Axis Powers would be victorious, and this resulted in his fullest possible compliance with German wishes. During his term as prime minister, Hungary sank deeper into the morass of fascism both in domestic and foreign affairs.

In the second half of 1941, the fascist system of terrorism spread still further in Hungary. Under the pretext of the war situation military jurisdiction was extended to the civilian population. Anyone could be tried by a military court on a charge of disloyalty, incitement or sabotage. Martial law was introduced in matters belonging to the sphere of military tribunals. A separate tribunal of the chief of staff was set up, whose death sentence precluded appeal and was carried out within two hours.

Anti-semitic incitement increased. Parliament adopted the third anti-Jewish law, which banned marriages between Jews and Christians. Under the provisions of the earlier laws about 80,000–90,000 Jewish employees were dismissed by the end of 1942. So-called 'forced labour battalions' were established for them, where they were subjected to the most brutal treatment possible. In the autumn of 1941, some 20,000–30,000 Jews living in Hungary, on the pretext that their citizenship papers were not in order, were deported to occupied Soviet territory and massacred.

One-fourth of the country's population, following the Vienna Awards and the subsequent occupation of Yugoslavia, once again consisted of national minorities. But the Hungarian government and its administrative apparatus, profiting nothing by past experiences, continued the minority policy where it had been left off in 1918. Moreover, the traditional methods of minority oppression were now supplemented by fascist military brutality. On the pretext of a revision of the Rumanian and Czechoslovak land reforms, the lands of Rumanian, Czech and even Hungarian peasants were confiscated on a large scale. Earlier the prospect of autonomy had been held out to the population of Ruthenia (Carpatho-Ukraine), but the military administration was retained throughout the whole period. The situation was especially serious in the Bácska. Here almost daily fresh atrocities were committed by the troops and the gendarmerie.

These outrages culminated in January 1942, in the bloodbath at Újvidék (Novi Sad), where, under the excuse of hunting for partisans, drunken soldiers and gendarmes murdered 3,300 people, Serbians and Jews for the most part, and threw their bodies into the Danube. Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, a noted anti-German deputy of the Smallholders' Party, who had received word of the massacre, demanded in vain that Prime Minister Bárdossy and the military leaders be held accountable for it; with Horthy's approval the whole matter was closed with a formal inquiry.



### War with Britain and the US. The Second Hungarian Army Sent to the Front

In the second half of 1941, German-Hungarian co-operation in the words of Ribbentrop, was 'most complete and harmonious'. But in December, a number of unexpected international events occurred. On 7 December, the British government carried out its earlier threat, and declared war on Hungary, as Hungarian troops were fighting on the territory of its ally, the Soviet Union. And a few days later the Bárdossy government, complying with German demands and without consulting parliament, declared war on the United States.

Simultaneously came the news of the first defeat of the German army in the Second World War. This defeat, in the vicinity of Moscow, put an end to illusions of a lightning war against the Soviet Union. On 6 January 1942, Foreign Minister Ribbentrop was sent to Budapest by Hitler. Apart from increased economic demands, Hitler insisted on Hungary stepping up her military participation in the war against the Soviet Union. The Hungarian government undertook a pledge to satisfy the economic requirements, but on the military demands it began to bargain. Finally it arrived at an agreement with Keitel, the German chief of staff, that it would send the Second Hungarian Army, altogether about 200,000 combat troops and 50,000 occupation troops, together with 40,000 left-wing, national minority and Jewish members of forced labour units, to the front in the spring of 1942. During the negotiations with Keitel the Hungarian government also agreed to allow the SS to recruit soldiers from among the German minority in Hungary, which was a serious infringement of Hungarian sovereignty.

After the January talks the Bárdossy government did not remain in office for very long. The battle for Moscow, even if it did not, for the moment, end German military superiority, nevertheless raised the prospect before the Hungarian ruling classes of the possibility of a German defeat. In comparison with the summer of 1941, when they had anticipated a sure and quick victory with few risks and relatively little effort, by the beginning of 1942 the situation had changed so much that tremendous efforts were necessary, and victory had become uncertain. These circumstances now strongly influenced the policy of the Hungarian ruling class. The political weight of the pro-Western groups increased once again, and they demanded the removal of the unconditionally pro-German Bárdossy. Two more factors contributed to this development. On the one hand, Horthy himself bore a grudge against Bárdossy, because when he had his son, István Horthy, elected

Vice-Regent in February 1942 Bárdossy did not support him with sufficient resolution. On the other hand, Horthy saw that Bárdossy's undisguised pro-German policy was driving broad sections of the masses to the left, as was evident from the ever stronger popular front actions.

### The Idea of a Popular Front Gains Ground

The left, for years ineffective in direct political action, began to gain strength in 1941. The idea of a united popular front ranging from the middle-class left wing, through the legally functioning workers' movement, all the way to the underground Communist Party, began to mature.

After Hungary's entry into the war, the underground Communist Party decided that its foremost task was to liberate the country from German rule, and it would subordinate all its activities to this objective.

The new political group made up of the left wing of the 'populist' writers, which demanded democratic rights and, above all, land for the peasants, was also sympathetic to the idea of an anti-fascist union. The influence of the left wing increased within the Social Democratic Party; both within the local organizations of the party and the trade unions, it strengthened anti-fascist efforts and made actions more militant. A number of prominent leaders of the bourgeois anti-German groups also changed their earlier views in the new situation; they had previously maintained that it was necessary to fight against fascism but not together with the Communists.

In the autumn of 1941, considerable anti-fascist demonstrations took place. The first one was organized for 6 October 1941, the anniversary of the memorial day of martyrs of the 1848-9 War of Independence, by the members of the National Youth Committee. Several hundred young people marched to the monument erected to Batthyány, the prime minister of the first Hungarian government who was executed in 1849, demonstrating their support of Hungarian independence. A few weeks later, on 1 November 1941, Communists, Social Democrats, writers, and political leaders of the Smallholders' and the Peasant Party placed wreaths on the graves of two great figures of the struggle for Hungarian freedom, Lajos Kossuth and Mihály Táncsics. At the wreath-laying ceremony a crowd of several thousand organized workers and university students demonstrated in favour of withdrawing from the war.

The idea of freedom, independence and unity gave birth to the 1941 Christmas issue of *Népszava*, the daily paper of the Social Democratic Party. The publication of the issue was once again the joint decision of the Communists and the left-wing Social Democrats. In the Christmas edition of the paper, alongside the articles of Communists and left-wing Social Democrats, there also appeared articles by bourgeois political figures, who had turned against German fascism, like Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky and Gyula Szekfű, the well-known conservative historian. The articles recalled the Hungarian struggles for independence and self-determination, and pointed out that the best representatives of the Hungarian people had always desired to formulate a foreign policy of co-operation with the neighbouring peoples.

Early in 1942, the movement grew broader. On 1 February, the first issue of the illegal paper of the Communist Party, *Szabad Nép*, was published. The paper's main aim was to strengthen the anti-fascist, anti-German independence struggle.

The popular front movement progressed so rapidly that in February 1942 the idea of forming a legal executive body for it was raised. This was how the Hungarian Historical Memorial Committee (*Magyar Történelmi Emlékbizottság*) came into existence. Formally its task was to collect historical relics and documents, but in actual practice it became the leading body of the anti-German independence movement. By reviving the memory of the struggle for freedom of 1848–9 it wished to enlist the people's support for the present movement. The Historical Memorial Committee was headed by outstanding Communist and non-Communist anti-fascist writers, artists, journalists and politicians. The most significant result of the committee's work was the celebration of the 15th of March, the anniversary of the outbreak of the 1848–9 War of Independence. Some 8,000–10,000 people gathered by the statue of the great Hungarian poet, Petőfi, in Budapest, to protest against the war and voice their demand for an 'independent, democratic Hungary'.

### The Kállay Government

In March 1942, Horthy appointed Miklós Kállay as prime minister in place of Bárdossy. Kállay was a typical representative of the Hungarian landowning class. His name and university education were sufficient for him to fill the post of lord lieutenant of Szabolcs County for many years. He knew something about farming and was the minister of agriculture in the first Gömbös government. But his political

views were more in sympathy with those of Bethlen. Thus turning against Gömbös, he withdrew from political activities and became head of the Office of Irrigation. It was from here that Horthy called upon him and assigned him the task of endeavouring to preserve the regime throughout the critical years that were approaching not by outright opposition to Nazism, but by ambiguous political manoeuvres.

But in March 1942, only the premonitory symptoms of the crisis were discernible. No efforts were therefore made by the government to change Bárdossy's policy. Kállay's task was only to prove the 'Hungarian' character of the war. In his first policy speech he stressed that 'it was not foreign interests that took us into this war'. This is 'our war... we are taking Hungarian soldiers into a Hungarian war'. But the 'more Hungarian' policy only meant that he was to continue the struggle against the Soviet Union; moreover, it was finally he who sent the Second Hungarian Army to the front, between April and June 1942.

An organic part of the 'more Hungarian' policy was the crushing of the growing resistance. Following the 15 March demonstration, the police and the gendarmerie retaliated with a massive attack on the Communist Party. At the end of April and in May, about 500 Communists were arrested and tried in court. The victims withstood the savage treatment and tortures heroically and died rather than reveal any information about their associates to their interrogators. Two leaders of the Communist Party met their death at this time: Ferenc Rózsa was beaten to death by gendarme interrogators, and Zoltán Schönherz was sentenced to death by a summary military tribunal. In April 1942, special punitive forced labour battalions were set up. Several hundred left-wing trade union leaders, Communists and Social Democrats were sent to the occupied Ukraine in this way. The military guards were instructed that not one of them was to return to Hungary.

### Defeat at Voronezh

Thus in 1942, Kállay's policy showed little change from that of the Bárdossy government; only certain modifications were apparent. But the events of the Soviet front and the victories of the Allies in Africa served as a warning to Kállay that it would be wise to initiate changes in Hungarian policy. The decisive impulse was provided by the catastrophic fate of the Hungarian army at Voronezh. The Hungarian troops sent to the front joined the German army's offensive in the

summer of 1942. In the course of their advance they reached the bank of the Don where they were assigned the responsibility of securing the northern wing of the German units besieging Stalingrad. The poorly equipped, tired Hungarian troops had already suffered severe losses in local battles; and when on 12 January 1943, as part of the Soviet counter-offensive at Stalingrad, an attack was launched at Voronezh against the Hungarian defence line, a debacle soon followed. The disorganized troops retreated headlong. Probably there were more losses on the retreat than in the battle. A great mass of men swarmed along the snowbound, almost impassable roads, and anyone who left them was lost. Some 7,000 Hungarian troops froze to death in the course of the retreat. The Germans, in order to ensure their own escape, obstructed the withdrawal of the Hungarian units by sending them into battle to cover their own retreat. No less than 40,000 Hungarian soldiers lost their lives, and about 70,000 severely wounded and half-frozen men became Soviet prisoners of war. This was the greatest defeat in Hungarian military history. The whole army was lost, including 70-80 per cent of the heavy armament and even part of the small arms, since the troops, to make their retreat easier, threw away their rifles.

#### The 'Shuttlecock Policy'. The Left Wing on the Move

After the defeat at Stalingrad and Voronezh the Kállay government saw that it was urgently necessary to establish contacts with the Western Powers through their political agents in the neutral countries. It therefore appointed new envoys to these countries, men who on the basis of their activities up till then were suitable for making contacts with the Western Powers. Istanbul, Madrid, Lisbon, Stockholm and Bern now witnessed the feverish activity of various Hungarian diplomats and political agents. But the government did not wish to talk with the Western Powers in order to get out of the war as early as possible and break its alliance with the Germans. It was more interested in learning what the post-war plans of the Western Powers were with regard to South-Eastern Europe; would they be willing to accept the Hungarian government's anti-Soviet services, and in exchange recognize its territorial demands after the war?

During these years, the Hungarian ruling circles were still not able to face up to the realities of Hungary's situation; they still dreamed of a leading role in the Danube valley. A few years earlier they had hoped

to achieve this with Hitler's help; now, they wanted to obtain assurances to this end from the Western Powers by promising a few social reforms. The Western negotiators demanded, first of all, that the Kállay government break with the Germans and pursue an anti-fascist policy, and they made no promises whatsoever regarding a post-war settlement. The agents of the Kállay government reached a provisional agreement with members of the British secret service after the Italian armistice. They agreed to the withdrawal of Hungarian troops from the Soviet front, the reduction of economic services to the Germans, and, as a step towards a break with the Germans, the reorganization of the pro-German General Staff.

The Kállay government did not carry out these commitments. This was due not only to political uncertainty and fear of the Germans, but also to the fact that some groups of the leading Hungarian political circles were sharply opposed even to these irresolute efforts. They still favoured the continuation of the war to the fullest possible extent and the alliance with Germany. Those sections of the middle classes which had increased their economic and political influence under the protective mantle of German Nazism, the owners of large and medium-sized estates, the General Staff, the officers corps, the gentry, the leading groups of the state administration, who had gained from the anti-Jewish laws—all recognized that their future depended on a German victory. These strata saw clearly that if the Germans were defeated, even if the social structure of the country could be preserved almost undamaged, they would still be forced into the background and would have to give up their leading political role and economic positions. Therefore, they saw but one course before them: to serve Hitler without hesitation and rallying the forces against the Soviet Union, to wage the war to the bitter end. These people, who were grouped around the right wing of the government party, the Imrédy party, and to a certain extent the Arrow-Cross Party, demanded total war and a corresponding domestic policy from the government. From the autumn of 1943, they also forged closer links with the Germans, with a view to a possible *coup d'État*.

The efforts of the extreme right-wing forces to prevent the country's withdrawal from the war could have been counteracted by the left, for the membership of the Arrow-Cross Party was declining, while the legal left-wing opposition, the Smallholders' Party and the Social Democratic Party, by availing themselves of the opportunities of free organization offered by the Kállay government, increased their membership, and their influence was growing. In the country's two largest war industrial centres, Csepel and Miskolc, there was growing dis-

content resulting in wage claims. Dissatisfaction spread among the peasants, who resented the system of compulsory deliveries of produce, and also among the working class, which was struggling against deteriorating standards of living resulting from inflation. The influence of the small underground Communist Party, which during the summer of 1943 changed its name to the Peace Party, gained ground in the left-wing middle-class and peasant organizations. Consequently, the number of people prepared to go beyond a passive opposition to the war, in order to achieve an independent, free and democratic Hungary, a radical land reform and, above all, peace, grew from day to day.

The government directed all its efforts towards preventing the formation of a popular front movement. It continued its merciless persecution of the Communists in order to render systematic co-operation between them and the legal opposition parties impossible.

#### **'Operation Margarethe'**

In view of the Kállay government's flirtation with the idea of withdrawing from the war and the rapid advance of the Soviet armies towards the Hungarian frontier, Hitler decided to occupy the country. One version of the so-called 'Operation Margarethe' drawn up for the occupation anticipated possible resistance, which was to have been crushed ruthlessly. Another version of the plan was based on the possibility that the occupation could be carried out with Horthy's approval, with a semblance of Hungarian sovereignty preserved and with the setting up of an extreme right-wing puppet government. Horthy, whom Hitler had summoned for talks in the days immediately preceding the occupation, again gradually came round to acceptance of Hitler's plans. Moreover, by appointing the new government desired by the Germans, and retaining his position as Regent, he legalized German control. This made the occupation of Hungary easy for the Nazis.

The Kállay government and the army did nothing to stop the eight or nine German divisions entering the country. Consequently, on 19 March 1944, the occupation of the country took place without any opposition whatsoever.

#### **German Occupation**

The Gestapo, which came into the country with the German troops, with the help of the Arrow-Cross Party and other agents of the extreme right, began at once to arrest the supporters of the left wing. They persecuted not only the Communists, but also arrested most of the leaders of the Smallholders' and the Social Democratic Parties. The leaders of the pro-British groups of the ruling classes suffered a similar fate. Members of parliament, members of the Upper House, journalists and leading businessmen of Jewish descent were arrested.

Horthy, who arrived home a few hours after the entry of the German divisions, appointed the former Berlin envoy, Döme Sztójay, as the successor to Prime Minister Kállay; an official statement issued a few days after the country's occupation attempted to give it a legal basis by claiming that 'the German troops had been requested by the Hungarian Government' to enter the country.

Döme Sztójay, a one-time army officer of limited ability and narrow views, had been Hungarian minister to Nazi Germany for nearly a decade, and represented the interests of the German government in Hungary more than the interests of the Hungarian government in Germany. His person and his government, which consisted of extreme right-wing and fascist elements, were an adequate assurance that he would serve the new German envoy, the 'Führer's authorized representative with full powers', Edmund Veesenmayer, to the end.

The new government spread fascism throughout the political life of the whole country. It restricted the activities of the press by banning hundreds of weekly and daily papers and by allowing the publication only of explicitly fascist and German-financed papers. It ensured the absolute rule of the right-wing elements in the municipal administration of the capital and in the countryside by a radical replacement of personnel. It organized the deportation of 450,000 people, the entire Jewish population of the Hungarian provinces, most of whom were sent to Auschwitz. About 75-80 per cent of the deportees perished in gas chambers or in the inhuman conditions of the various concentration camps. The news of the mass murder of Jews spread abroad and caused tremendous indignation in international public opinion. The Hungarian government was warned that not only the Germans, but the Hungarian authorities as well, were responsible for the deportations, and would answer for their crimes after the war. This induced Horthy, who had given the government a free hand until June, to halt further deportations, but they had already been completed all over the country, with the exception of the capital.

### Establishment of the Hungarian Front

The combined efforts of the Gestapo, the Hungarian police and the gendarmerie failed to crush completely the left-wing forces. The authorities gained little by jailing their leaders, sending them to concentration camps, or even killing them, as they did with Endre Ságvári, one of the leaders of the Peace Party. An agreement was soon reached between the Communists, fighting underground for nearly a quarter of a century, and the Social Democrats and the Smallholders, who were also driven underground after the German occupation, on the establishment of a central body of the resistance, called the Hungarian Front. Soon they were joined by a number of other smaller left-wing or anti-German organizations.

The Hungarian Front appealed to the public to carry out acts of resistance, strikes, sabotage and protest against the brutal treatment of the Jews. The Communists wished to use the united anti-fascist forces to speed up Hungary's liberation with an armed uprising, and thus regain the country's national honour, which had been forfeited by the assumption of the role of Hitler's satellite. But the development of an armed uprising was hindered by the fact that the Hungarian Front did not succeed in widening its influence sufficiently among the masses. Although the unbridled terror, the forced labour and the constant requisitioning evoked resistance among the population, this rarely grew to the proportions of open fighting against the Germans, and only a few small partisan units really engaged in active warfare.

### The Lakatos Government.

### The 15 October Proclamation.

### Szálasi's Reign of Terror

The successful invasion by the Western Powers and the changes in Rumania on 23 August 1944, when the Antonescu government was overthrown and Rumania withdrew from the war, again strengthened Horthy's resolve to get out of the war. Therefore he dismissed the Sztójay government and appointed General Géza Lakatos as prime minister. He again sought contacts with the Western Powers, but upon their rejection, after a delay of a good month, he sent a secret armistice mission to Moscow late in September. The delegation, after some wrangling, signed a preliminary armistice agreement, which, among other things, required that the Hungarian government break off its alliance with the Germans.

Horthy hoped to arrange the armistice with the help of a few of his generals, confident that the army would obey his commands. At the same time he was anxious to keep away from it any forces that might turn the break with Germany into a movement to restore democracy in Hungary. Thus he made no political or even military preparations for withdrawing from the war, although there were considerable forces conspiring against him and any movement towards peace. The Germans, who, even if unaware of how far the negotiations had progressed, were in no doubt about Horthy's intentions, played their last trick: Szálasi's disreputable Arrow-Cross movement. They decided to prevent Hungary's secession from the war by putting these Arrow-Cross supporters into power. To accomplish this they concentrated considerable German forces around Budapest, and did their best to prepare the Arrow-Cross rabble militarily and politically.

In his proclamation over the radio on 15 October, Horthy announced that he had asked for an armistice, but he did not appeal to the workers, or the army, to turn against the Germans. His secret instructions, informing the commanders of the First and Second Armies of the change of sides, were either not forwarded, or were falsified by the pro-German officers of the General Staff. At the front, after a few hours of confusion, the Arrow-Cross officers of the army took over command, and the troops, who had received no orders to turn their guns against the Germans, submitted to them. To a great extent the same thing happened in the capital; there was no organized force whatever to put the armistice into effect. The troops ordered to Budapest to defend it did not all arrive, and part of those that did proved unreliable. The major part of the officers corps, reared for decades in an anti-Soviet fascist spirit, refused to accept the proclamation and turn against the Germans. The German troops and groups of armed Arrow-Cross men captured the capital within a few hours, occupied the radio station, public buildings and the military barracks. In the evening the radio broadcast Szálasi's manifesto on the seizure of power and the continuation of the war, which had been prepared and printed in Vienna several weeks earlier. The next day Horthy, fearing for the life of his son in German captivity, paid the Germans one last service: he retracted his proclamation and appointed Ferenc Szálasi as the royal Hungarian prime minister. That marked the beginning of the Arrow-Cross reign of terror.

Total chaos seized Hungary; the Arrow-Cross mob that had come to power set out on a policy of plunder and terror. In order to slow down the forward thrust of the Soviet army, the Germans demanded total mobilization. Szálasi promised Hitler to send one and a half



million Hungarian soldiers to the front, and to do this he planned to call up for military or labour service people of both sexes between the ages of 12 and 70. Orders were issued to dismantle the factories and transport them to Germany together with the livestock in the country. Such factory installations as could not be shipped were destroyed by vandals. The greater part of the rolling stock of the railways was carried away, as were the precious metal reserves in the National Bank of Hungary. All over the country bridges were mined and eventually blown up before the advancing Soviet troops. The population were ordered to evacuate their domiciles and retreat to Germany together with the defeated fascist armies. The Nazis and their Hungarian hirelings were set on turning Hungary into a vast expanse of uninhabited, scorched desert. In November, all political prisoners, most of them Communists, were turned over to the Germans, who carried them off to concentration camps where the majority perished through torture and privation. The terrorism of the Arrow-Cross detachments reached its height with their treatment of the Jewish population of Budapest. Some 80,000 people, including many old people and children, were driven on foot to extermination camps in Germany and German-occupied territory. The rest were herded into a ghetto set up at feverish speed. During the night hundreds would be carried off forcibly to various Arrow-Cross headquarters, only to be tortured and eventually executed on the Danube embankment. The murders committed by the Arrow-Cross during a period of a few weeks can be estimated at about 10,000 in Budapest alone. The various orders for mobilization or forced evacuation meant that no one in the Hungarian capital could live in safety. Posters covered the crumbling walls threatening people with summary execution for not obeying orders.

In the parts of the country not yet liberated by the Soviet army complete economic and political confusion reigned. The disintegration of the Hungarian army progressed rapidly, and although only a handful went over to the Soviet troops in closed formations, the number of deserters and fugitives in hiding ran to tens of thousands, and this process could not be halted by Szálasi's decrees threatening summary trial and execution. The population ignored orders to evacuate. At certain places, especially in workers' settlements, the Arrow-Cross detachments met with organized resistance. Thus, for instance, the workers of Csepel and Diósgyőr, two centres of heavy industry, united in rejecting an order demanding the dismantling of the factories and the forced evacuation of the populace. Similar events occurred in some mining districts as well. The peasantry and the majority of the urban population also refused to leave. Only an insignificant fraction

of the population could be induced by the Arrow-Cross gangs and the Germans to follow their fleeing masters to Germany.

At the same time, signs of active opposition also increased. Although Horthy's proclamation had frustrated the Hungarian Front's armed uprising planned for 17 October, the Arrow-Cross terror provoked further resistance.

After 15 October the Communists and the other parties of the Hungarian Front undertook to organize armed struggle. At the beginning of November, with Bajcsy-Zsilinszky as chairman, the parties of the Hungarian Front established the command of the armed resistance, known as the Liberation Committee of the Hungarian National Uprising. But before they could put their plan into operation, the Arrow-Cross captured the general staff of the movement. Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, Lieutenant-General János Kiss and others were sentenced to death and executed. But not even this was able to prevent the organization of partisan fighting groups. Although without a comprehensive centralized command or unified military leadership, the Communists succeeded in organizing groups of partisans in various parts of the country. In addition to the 'Rákóczi' brigade fighting in the Carpatho-Ukraine and the 'Petőfi' group in Slovakia, a number of smaller bands also became active. In Budapest, a number of small partisan groups carried out attacks on German troops and on consignments of military supplies. Youth workers formed small units to carry out sabotage, and armed resistance groups functioned in the Bükk and Bakony mountains. But all these could contribute very little to the country's liberation. That task had to be accomplished by the Soviet army.

*Chapter X*

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY IN HUNGARY

# 1. STRUGGLE TO ESTABLISH DEMOCRACY IN HUNGARY (1944-1948)

**Liberation of Hungary.  
The Country in Ruins.  
People's Democracy**

The liberation of Hungary began at the end of September 1944 when the troops of the Soviet army crossed the frontiers of the country. Military operations in October liberated the region east of the Tisza river and the southern part of the area between the Danube and the Tisza, and it was here that the country's social rebirth began. The war of liberation lasted until 4 April 1945, and meanwhile the reign of terror of the German fascists and the Hungarian Arrow-Cross movement raged over the territories of the country not yet liberated.

The reorganization of normal life was begun under extremely difficult conditions. The country had suffered unbelievably extensive economic damage as the consequence of looting by the German and Hungarian fascists and of military operations. Damage was assessed at 22,000 million *pengő*s as based on the 1938 *pengő*, i.e. five times the 1938 national income, or about 40 per cent of the 1944 national wealth. Agriculture lost more than half its livestock and 30 per cent of its machines and equipment. Mining and industry lost about half their productive capacity and an even greater part of their stock of raw materials and industrial goods. The greatest damage was inflicted on the transport services: 36 per cent of the railways and 99 per cent of the large bridges were destroyed or heavily damaged. The Germans took away a major part of the railway rolling stock and all the river vessels. One-quarter of the country's houses were damaged, and the majority of those in Budapest were destroyed or seriously damaged.

Production came to a standstill, the old state apparatus disintegrated and there was no organized public administration in the liberated, but still isolated villages and towns. But this state of paralysis lasted for only a very short time; new, hitherto suppressed forces emerged from the ranks of the workers, peasants and democratically-minded intelligentsia. The quickest and most business-like organizers were the Communists. They were the ones who made contact with the local commandants of the Red Army, they provided leadership in the or-

ganization of local assemblies in towns and villages, and they were the ones who launched public administrative bodies and served as their first officials. It was also the Communists who promoted the beginning of production again and saw to it that the needy were provided for. Their activities were followed by the increasing support of the working population. The development of a democratic movement was assisted by the historical circumstance that the country was liberated by the Soviet Union; this ensured the left wing favourable international conditions for carrying out the country's democratic transformation without the danger of foreign intervention, amidst relatively peaceful circumstances.

In the early days of December 1944, at Szeged, representatives of the Communist Party, the Social Democratic Party, the National Peasant Party, the Smallholders' Party and the trade unions formed the Hungarian National Independence Front, which was destined to provide the most comprehensive political foundation for the new democratic society. Its programme, which was outlined at a mass meeting on 3 December, demanded that Hungary break with Nazi Germany at once and give extensive support to the Red Army. It also demanded as a fundamental condition for the transformation to a people's democracy a radical land reform, and demanded government control of the big banks and cartels and the nationalization of electric power stations and oil wells. It declared its support for the establishment of a new, democratic state power, and called for the creation of national committees made up of representatives of the coalition parties to be set up in every community as local organs of the Independence Front. Lastly, the programme called for the convening of a new, democratic parliament, and the formation of an Independence Front government.

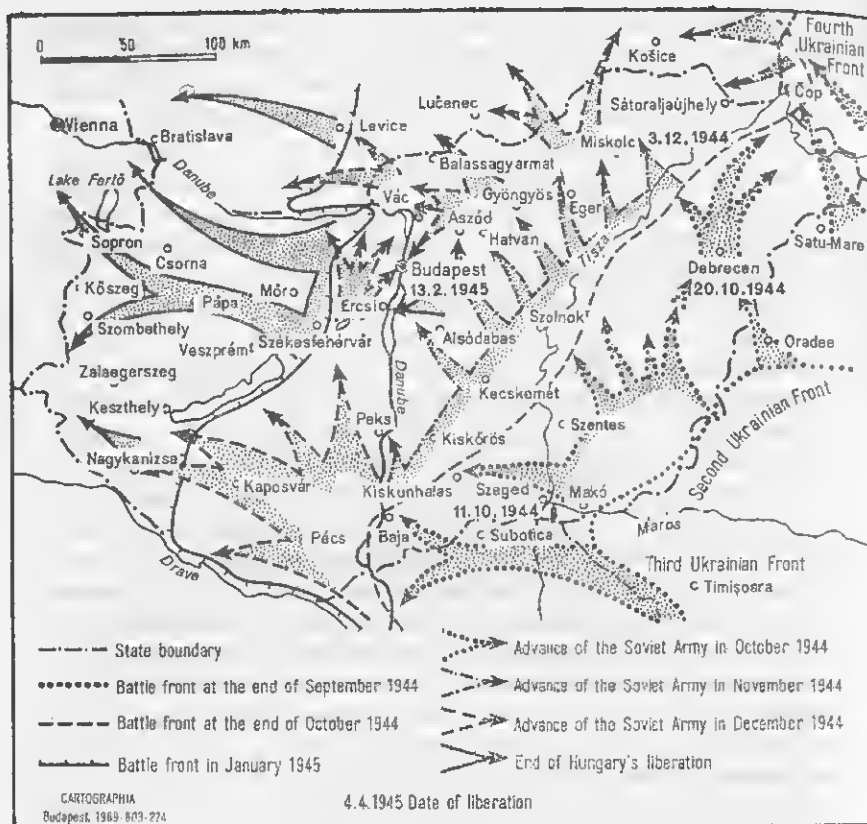
This national, democratic and anti-fascist programme, and the very formation of the Independence Front, had a stimulating influence on the development of a democratic movement and also on the establishment of the central organs of the new Hungarian state. On 22 December 1944, the provisional National Assembly was convened in Debrecen, and the Provisional Government came into existence. Its prime minister was General Béla Dálnoki Miklós, and its ministers included three generals who had turned against the German fascists, three Communists, two Smallholders, two Social Democrats and one representative of the Peasant Party. The Provisional Government adopted the programme proclaimed by the Independence Front.

The formation and activities of the Provisional Government led to quick results. Everywhere throughout the liberated countryside na-

tional committees and other democratic organizations were formed. The organization of the Communist Party and the rest of the anti-fascist parties began. In the factories deserted by the capitalists, the trade union movement revived and, with the help of the local organizations of the Communist and Social Democratic Parties, factory committees (local bodies of workers' control) came into existence. The preponderance of left-wing, democratic forces was ensured by the close co-operation and unity of action between the Communist and Social Democratic Parties.

The government got to work on the most urgent tasks. On 28 December 1944, it repudiated the treaties concluded with Germany and declared war on that country, and on 20 January 1945, it concluded an armistice with the Allied Powers in Moscow. In the armistice agreement the government undertook to play an active role in the war against Germany, to pay the Soviet Union 200 million dollars and to Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia a total of 100 million dollars as war reparations for the damage caused by the Hungarian fascist army. Payment was to be made in the form of deliveries of goods. The armistice agreement invalidated the Vienna Awards and fixed the frontiers of the country as they had existed in December 1937. Hungary also undertook the obligation of disbanding all fascist organizations and bringing war criminals to justice. Finally an Allied Control Commission was to function in Hungary, under the chairmanship of a representative of the Soviet High Command, to supervise and regulate the implementation of the armistice provisions.

While the armistice negotiations were proceeding, the government began to create a new, democratic state apparatus. In its decree of 4 January 1945, it removed the local state administration from the authority of the national committees, and took steps to reorganize the organs of self-government and public administration under the direction of the national committees in a more democratic sense, to represent broader strata of the population. The government dissolved one of the instruments of the Horthy regime's terroristic repression, the gendarmerie, and began to establish a democratic police force. People's courts were established in place of the old courts with the task of bringing to justice those who had committed war crimes and crimes against the civilian population. Another decree provided for the setting up of political screening committees; they were charged with the task of enquiring into the past political conduct of civil servants and others (employees in private offices, businessmen, etc.). The government decree on factory committees rendered these bodies of workers' control a regular part of every factory and vested them



The Liberation of Hungary

with wide powers. On 30 January 1945, the government's appeal for volunteers for the new democratic army was published. By March, two divisions were already in arms, but owing to the short time left before the end of the war there was no opportunity for them to participate effectively in the fight against the Germans.

Great new problems remained for the government to tackle after the liberation of Budapest (Pest was liberated on 18 January, Buda on 13 February). Although in the siege of Budapest the Soviet army did not employ heavy artillery, the deliberate destruction carried on by the fascists and the house to house battles inflicted tremendous damage. The fascists blew up all the bridges. A considerable part of the houses and factories collapsed in rubble. The food stocks of the population were practically exhausted. Those Jews who had escaped extermination owing to the rapid advance of the Soviet army had been crowded into the ghetto. Famine and epidemics threatened. But the restoration of normal life proceeded rapidly in the capital too. On 19 January, *Szabadság*, the first daily newspaper in liberated Pest, made its appearance. The Budapest National Committee was formed. A few days later, part of the workers, starving, cold and ragged, began to restore the machines in the factories and put them into operation. The government appointed the Communist Zoltán Vas to perform the tasks of government commissioner in Budapest. The government commission supported the population with every means at its disposal and, with the help of Soviet aid and supplies brought from the countryside, it succeeded in providing the population in April and May with basic foodstuffs.

Politically the liberation of Budapest resulted in the growth of socialist and democratic forces. The strength of the Communist Party increased by leaps and bounds. The influence of the Social Democratic Party also broadened. The two workers' parties' executive bodies, now complete and up to full strength, also approved the agreement for unity of action that had been made in Debrecen. On the other hand, the liberation of Budapest promoted the consolidation of the bourgeoisie and the acceleration of the political organizations of the petty bourgeoisie.

### The Land Reform

The most effective political measure during the early days of the Provisional Government was the land reform. It had been called for not only by the Communist, the National Peasant and the Social



Democratic Parties, but by the mass movement of the population of the liberated villages. The government decree putting an end to the system of big estates and granting land to the cultivators was issued on 17 March 1945. According to the decree the landed property of traitors and fascists was entirely confiscated, and estates over 1,000 *hold* were fully expropriated. Estates under 1,000 *hold*, all properties greater than 100 *hold*, all forest lands greater than 10 *hold* and all vineyards and orchards greater than 20 *hold* were also expropriated. The decree made no distinctions between the big estates of secular or clerical owners; therefore about 900,000 *hold* of large estates owned by the Catholic Church were expropriated. The landed estates of the banks and big business interests were also distributed. The decree stipulated that properties not greater than 200 *hold* which were owned by peasants and were being farmed by peasants as their means of livelihood would not be expropriated; thus the overwhelming part of the well-to-do peasants' lands was not affected by the decree. This decree also provided detailed directives for carrying out the land reform, the most important of which was the setting up of land-claim committees. It was the task of these committees to carry out the land reform locally.

The realization of the entire land reform took about three months. An indication of its scope is the fact that it affected about 35 per cent of the country's arable area. The land fund amounted to about 5,600,000 *hold*, of which 3,260,000 *hold* were distributed. The rest of the expropriated land, largely forests, became the property of the state. Among those who shared in the land reform and received land of their own were 110,000 former agricultural labourers on the big estates, 261,000 other agricultural labourers, 214,000 'dwarf' holders (owners of a plot of land not great enough to provide them with a livelihood), as well as small peasants and village handicraftsmen. The share of land each person received averaged about 5.1 *hold*.

Amidst a thousand hardships the new owners went to work with enormous effort and great confidence. They were aided in their work by the government and the Soviet army, which gave them sowing seed and fuel, and also by the fact that, as the result of the land reform, the surviving livestock and other equipment of the big estates also came into their hands.

The land reform brought about a profound transformation in the country's economic and social conditions. It greatly reduced the economic weight of the well-to-do peasants and made the system of small properties farmed individually by their owners dominant in agriculture. It reduced the landless and 'dwarf owner' population of

the country by 1,300,000, and increased the owners of 5 to 25 *hold* of land, that is, the small and middle peasant population, by 1,200,000. The land reform was significant politically as well; under its impact the strength of the Communist and other left-wing forces became consolidated in the countryside, and it precipitated a profound democratic development amongst the old, conservative-minded small and middle peasantry.

### **Relations and Struggles among the Parties**

In the late spring and early summer of 1945 a new phase began in the history of liberated Hungary. Following the complete liberation of the country and the solution of the most basic democratic tasks (the establishment of the new state, the land reform, curbing the capitalists) numerous other new problems had to be tackled in order to consolidate democracy and further extend the democratic and anti-capitalist achievements. All this had to be accomplished in a situation in which the differences between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers began to sharpen, and in which the reactionary forces at home began to rally their strength. Within the Independence Front there had been differences from the very start. The right wing of the Front, which consisted mainly of the Independent Smallholders' Party, and which enjoyed considerable support from the right wing of the National Peasant Party and the Social Democratic Party, endeavoured to restrict the inevitable economic and political changes to the smallest possible scale and to keep these changes from resulting in the further strengthening of the left.

The differences within the coalition grew acute in the summer of 1945. This was reflected in the national congresses held by the coalition parties in the summer. At its national conference at the end of May, the Hungarian Communist Party (MKP) designated economic reconstruction as the country's most important task. To this end, it expressed its support for working-class unity and the further preservation of democratic national unity, but it pointed out that the Smallholders' Party had swung to the right and that differences within the coalition had increased. At its congress in August, the Social Democratic Party, which had gained considerable influence not only among the old organized workers but also among democratically-minded sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie, also adopted progressive resolutions. It came out in support of co-operation with the Communists, the increased control and restriction of the capitalists,

and the adoption of the republic as the country's form of government; but the right-wing elements also strengthened their position within the party's executive body. The most visible proof of the sharpening of differences within the Independence Front were the changes in the composition and policy of the Smallholders' Party. This party, which had its mass base among the majority of the well-to-do and propertied peasants, turned into a focus of the right wing by the summer of 1945. It gained the support of those sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia which opposed the democratic transformation and the support of various capitalist groups. The Smallholders' Party was also backed by the Hungarian clergy, who had been divested of their landed estates. The congress of that party in August 1945, was in reality the launching of a new opposition platform. Its demands—revision of the 'irregularities' of the land reform, the proclamation of the peasantry's 'right to strike', a halt in the revolutionary transformation and an end to the fight against the reactionaries—reflected the interests of the well-to-do peasants and the big capitalists. The democratically-minded small peasantry and intelligentsia had hardly any influence on the party's leaders.

### Inflation

The difficulties and the differences were increased by the serious condition of an economy ruined by the war, and rapidly growing inflation.

In 1945 and the first half of 1946 the inflation that raged in Hungary was unprecedented anywhere in its scope; in its last phase the value of one gold *pengő* of 1938 amounted to 1.4 quadrillion *pengős*. The cause of this fantastic inflation was the great decline in production and the catastrophic condition of the state finances, at a time when the state's economic role and financial needs had greatly increased in comparison to the past.

The serious economic situation and the inflation had far-reaching political consequences. The disruption of normal economic relations between town and countryside offered wide scope for the anti-worker and anti-city agrarian demagoguery of the Smallholders' Party. The low real wages of the workers and their rapid decline strengthened within them the elements of instinctive rebellion and dissatisfaction, and among the old reactionary forces inflation strengthened hopes for the restoration of capitalism. On the other hand, this economic situation made the intervention of the state in economic affairs necessary.



In December 1945, under left-wing leadership, the Supreme Economic Council was formed and was made responsible for the distribution of state credits and the very limited stocks of raw materials. The Council became an active and effective instrument of state supervision of the capitalists. At the end of 1945, the coal mines were placed under state supervision, which for all practical purposes meant their nationalization. The right of the trade unions and the factory committees to a voice in the activities of enterprises under private ownership increased, and state intervention in wage relations and the control of prices also grew.

#### The 1945 Elections.

##### Attack of the Right, Counter-Attack by the Left

The internal differences within the coalition were also reflected in the parliamentary elections of November 1945. The reactionary circles that rallied behind the Smallholders' Party which was voicing the slogans of bourgeois democracy, exploited to their own benefit the momentary difficulties of democratic development and such negative but still influential heritages of Hungarian history as nationalism and anti-semitism. The Hungarian Catholic clergy intervened in the elections in favour of the right wing. The agrarian demagoguery of the Smallholders' Party in the countryside was combined with extensive anti-Soviet and nationalistic agitation.

The Budapest local government elections in October, where the common list of Communist and Social Democratic candidates won 42 per cent of the votes, were a straw in the wind as regards the results of the approaching national elections. Thus, at the parliamentary elections on 7 November the Smallholders' Party obtained an absolute majority of 57 per cent. The Communist and Social Democratic Parties each won 17 per cent and the National Peasant Party 7 per cent. The rest of the votes (a mere fraction) went to the Bourgeois Democratic Party representing certain upper layers of the urban bourgeoisie, and the Radical Party made up of part of the democratic urban petty bourgeoisie.

The mass influence of the right was only able to make more difficult the development of a people's democratic state and of a new social order, it could not halt it. The Communist Party and the other left-wing parties were supported by the politically most mature and most conscious sections of the population (at the elections nearly two million workers voted for the left-wing parties). The right wing's



election success caused the Communist and Social Democratic Parties to strengthen their alliance, which had not been free of dissension. The left held important positions of state power. Relying on these positions and on the left-wing masses, on 1 February 1946 it proclaimed the republic and adopted a law to protect the republican form of government which provided effective legal protection for the democratic achievements. In March 1946, on the initiative of the Communists, the Communist Party, the Social Democratic Party and the National Peasant Party formed a Left-Wing Bloc in which the Trade Union Council also participated. The purpose of the Bloc was to bring about closer co-operation between left-wing parties within the Independence Front. Under the pressure of the Left-Wing Bloc the Smallholders' Party was compelled to consent to the nationalization of the four largest heavy industrial enterprises and to expel from its own ranks the most compromised representatives of the extreme right. A certain balance between the political forces was temporarily restored, and the political conditions were established for steps to be taken to halt the inflation, which by then had entered its most destructive phase.

### Stabilization

Significant results had been attained in the restoration of production and in reconstruction. In April 1946, the Soviet Union considerably lightened the burden of war reparation deliveries and the Western Powers appeared ready to return part of the economic wealth removed to the West by the fascists, along with the gold reserves of the National Bank.

In the preparatory stage of the currency stabilization, the bourgeoisie and the right wing of the Smallholders' Party wanted to put into force their own plan—economic rehabilitation restricted to central banking policy and a loan from the West. Before long, however, the plan of the Communist Party, which enjoyed broad mass support, was adopted as the government's official programme. This plan was based on the realistic prospect that in 1946 the country's national income would amount to 60 per cent of that of 1938, and although a relatively large portion of it would have to be diverted to meet the state financial requirements, including war reparations and expenditures for reconstruction, it was possible to introduce a tax system and a price and wage structure which would allow the real wages of workers to rise to at least 50 per cent of the 1938 level. This

modest plan for stabilization, which under the given conditions was regarded as a great achievement, was realized in practice; after lengthy preparations, the new currency, the forint, was introduced on 1 August 1946.

The currency stabilization was a complete success. Economic conditions, the real-wage level and productivity improved by leaps and bounds, and the second stage of economic reconstruction could now be launched. The reform of the currency and the measures introduced in its wake, such as strict state credit policy—although to a certain extent they consolidated the economic position of the capitalist class—were new instruments in the hands of the government for the supervision and restriction of big business. At the same time, they increased the influence of the Communist Party and the entire left wing over the masses.

### The Peace Treaty

The country's international position also began to improve. In April 1946, a Hungarian government delegation visited Moscow, and in June, Great Britain and the United States. Even more significant were the results of the conference of foreign ministers begun at the end of May. The Great Powers agreed on the basic principles of a peace treaty to be concluded with the former satellite countries, including Hungary, and set the date for the beginning of peace negotiations for the end of July. Although numerous questions were left pending at the peace conference and there were sharp discussions between the representatives of the Western Powers on the one hand, and the Soviet Union and the countries supporting her on the other, by the autumn of 1946, the essential part of the peace negotiations were concluded, and there remained only the formality of the ceremony for signing the treaty.

All this greatly promoted the realization of the Communist Party's political plans. At the Third Congress of the Hungarian Communist Party at the end of September 1946, it was announced that the party was striving for the socialist transformation of the country. It wished to attain its objective through the control and restriction of big business, and its gradual expropriation through the extensive application of the economic forms of state capitalism. The party stressed that even in the course of the gradual realization of socialist changes it was relying on the alliance of the working class and the middle sections of the population and on the multi-party system. The party thought it



feasible for socialist big industry to exist side by side with peasant small-commodity production for a prolonged period, but advocated the gradual transformation of private small-scale farming by the peasants into socialist forms of production. Finally, the party regarded the development of a planned economy as urgent.

But the international situation of 1947 did not make it possible to carry out the 1946 programme in its entirety. The signing of the peace treaties (the Hungarian treaty was signed on 10 January 1947) was the last international action for a long time to come that was preceded by common agreement amongst the Great Powers. In the spring of 1947, a number of measures of the Western Powers, especially of the United States, led to a deterioration in the international situation (the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine and of the Marshall Plan, and the rupture in a number of Western countries of the coalitions with the Communists).

### Speeding Up Socialist Transformation

This trend in the international situation had a polarizing effect on Hungary's domestic political situation; the reactionary and conservative capitalist circles, and the counter-revolutionary forces joined with them, confident that a swing to the right was imminent, concentrated their forces. On the other hand, the Communist Party embarked on a course of winning complete control of state power and expropriating big business at an accelerated rate. At the end of 1946 the authorities discovered a plot against the republic which was traced to several right-wing leaders of the Smallholders' Party. The Communist Party leadership endeavoured to use the exposure of the conspiracy to bring about a swing to the left in the Smallholders' Party. It combined this endeavour with the demand for the nationalization of the leading big banks which it deemed necessary for the successful implementation of the Three Year Reconstruction Plan. This plan, worked out by the Communist Party, was adopted meanwhile as the government's programme and was to be launched on 1 August 1947. The demand for the nationalization of the banks went far beyond the measures which until then had been directed against big business; this meant the nationalization not only of the credit system but also of a great part of industry, because the major part of large industry was concentrated in the hands of the big banks.

The sharp political struggle lasted for months, but an event with the greatest implications took place at the end of May and early June;

the right-wing leaders of the Smallholders' Party, compromised because of their part in the conspiracy, resigned, and Ferenc Nagy, the Prime Minister, who was in Switzerland in May, never came back to Hungary. Political figures on the executive body of the Smallholders' Party who were willing to co-operate with the Communists and the left-wing parties came to the forefront. Lajos Dinnyés, a left-wing representative of the Smallholders, became the prime minister of the new government, and the government adopted the Three Year Plan and the nationalization of the big banks as its programme.

### Elections in 1947.

#### Nationalization Begins

In Hungary the period lasting from the summer of 1947 to the summer of 1948 is called 'the year of change'. In the parliamentary elections held at the end of August a much more united government coalition entered the campaign. In the spring of 1947, the National Peasant Party also became more united; at its national conference it expelled its anti-Communist right-wing leaders, who leaned towards the right wing of the Smallholders' Party. The right-wing and reactionary circles, after it became evident that the Smallholders' Party was no longer a suitable vehicle for the realization of their ambitions since it had come under new leadership, immediately withdrew their support from it. The heritage of the right-wing umbrella party that had now fallen apart was taken over by several openly opposition parties, the most significant of which were the Hungarian Independence Party, headed by Zoltán Pfeiffer, a party that enjoyed the confidence of big businessmen and the old reactionary sections of the population, and the Democratic People's Party supported by certain church circles.

At the elections in August 1947, it became evident that the bourgeois right wing and the clerical and fascist reactionary elements still had considerable influence. Pfeiffer's party, drawing its support overwhelmingly from the reactionary urban petty bourgeoisie and the capitalist and landowning circles, obtained 14 per cent of the vote. The clerical Democratic People's Party won 16 per cent of the votes, in the main from politically immature and religious peasantry. On the other side, however, more than three million people or 61 per cent of the electorate, an absolute majority, voted for the programme of the Independence Front. The Communist Party became the country's strongest and largest party considering its proportion of votes; it received 22 per cent of all ballots cast. The National Peasant Party, co-

operating closely with the Communists, increased its votes to 10 per cent. The Social Democratic Party lost 71 per cent of its 1945 votes and gained only 15.1 per cent of the votes.

After a government crisis lasting for weeks, and the curbing of the right-wing circles which had suffered defeat, the new government was formed, headed by István Dobi, the leader of the left wing of the Smallholders' Party, one-time agricultural labourer. In October 1947, acting upon the demand of the Communists and the left-wing parties, the National Electoral Committee suspended the parliamentary mandates of the openly extreme right-wing Pfeiffer party, and later the ministry of interior dissolved the party. A few weeks later, after its leader István Barankovics defected to the West, the Democratic People's Party also disintegrated.

By 20 November, parliament had debated and adopted the bill to nationalize the big banks. With its acceptance the overwhelming part of the credit organization, heavy industry and a large part of light industry became state property. This was followed, on 25 March 1948, by the nationalization of industrial enterprises employing more than 100 workers which affected close on 600 factories. By the spring of 1948, 85 per cent of the workers in mining and industry were already employed in the state-owned sector.

The political transformation exerted a great influence on the realization of the Three Year Plan, adopted as law in July 1947, and launched on 1 August. The carrying out of the provisions of the plan, after initial difficulties, speeded up, and in the first year the investments envisaged were overfulfilled by 10 per cent. By the summer of 1948, mining and manufacturing attained 90 per cent of the production level of the year 1938. As a consequence of the upswing in agriculture, there was a rapid rise in the living standards of the workers; by the summer of 1948, the standard of living came close to that of 1938.

### **The Fusion of the Workers' Parties**

The most significant political event of 'the year of change' was the fusion of the two workers' parties. The preparations for this, through the close co-operation of the left-wing Social Democratic leaders with the Communist Party, were essentially completed by the spring of 1948, after several months of sharp debates and struggle within the Social Democratic Party. At the plenary executive meeting of the Social Democratic Party in February 1948, the pressure of the left wing compelled the most compromised right-wing Social Democratic

leaders to resign. The congress of the party, convened early in March, announced the necessity for a fusion with the Communist Party. In March, organizational preparations for the fusion also began. The two parties formed a joint political and organizing committee. At the end of April, the fusion of the parties began in the local branches, at first in the six most important large industrial enterprises in Budapest. When the Fourth Congress of the Hungarian Communist Party and the Thirty-seventh Congress of the Social Democratic Party were convened on 12 June 1948, the merging of the two parties had for all practical purposes already taken place. The two congresses officially announced the fusion, and on the following day, 13 June, the First Congress of the united party of the working class, the Hungarian Working People's Party (MDP), opened.

In several respects the resolutions of the congress already reflected the dissensions that had erupted between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Yugoslav Communist Party some months earlier. Hence Stalin's spurious theory of the inevitability of the constant sharpening of the class struggle was incorporated in the resolutions, and such questions as the form the people's front should take were left unresolved. But the congress still designated the immediate tasks that had to be undertaken: complete democratization of the state machinery, the drawing up of a new constitution, the raising of living standards through the realization of a new Five Year Plan of development, the ending of the cultural monopoly of the well-to-do classes, the nationalization of schools still in the hands of the Church, the introduction of an educational reform and the consolidation of the country's international position, with closer relations with the Soviet Union and the surrounding people's democracies. These objectives were supported by several international treaties. Early in 1948, a Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Aid was concluded with Yugoslavia; similar treaties were also signed with the other socialist states: on 24 January with Rumania, on 10 February with the Soviet Union, on 18 June with Poland, on 16 July with Bulgaria and a few months later with Czechoslovakia.

## 2. ON THE ROAD OF SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION

### Establishment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The Five Year Plan

The period between 1948 and 1960 was an era of contradictions in the history of the Hungarian People's Democracy. It included stages of dynamic progress, distortions and mistakes in state leadership, the counter-revolution of 1956, and finally the new impetus in socialist construction.

Between the summer of 1948 and 1950, the people's democratic regime was established in Hungary. This regime, in essence, was a dictatorship exercised by an alliance of the industrial proletariat, the working peasantry and the section of the intelligentsia desiring social progress. Social conditions were characterized by the dominant role of the state and co-operatively owned means of production in industry, trade and transportation, and due to the growth in the number of co-operative farms formed by the peasants, in agriculture as well. An economic development plan drawn up for a definite period served as the instrument for the development of the national economy. It was administered centrally and controlled through a system of directives. A single party, the Hungarian Working People's Party, played the leading role in public affairs and the management of the state.

In March 1949, the Independence Front became the Independent People's Front. The People's Front would no longer be a loose coalition of the various parties but, under the leadership of the Hungarian Working People's Party, should unite the mass organizations of the workers and other classes of society engaged in various kinds of work. The May 1949 parliamentary elections proved that among the masses confidence in the Communists was increasing rapidly, and that the vast majority of the people were identifying themselves with the programme of socialist construction. At the elections the list of candidates of the People's Front received 95.6 per cent of the votes.

In August 1949, parliament passed the Constitution of the Hungarian People's Republic. This was the first written constitution of the country and it stated that 'the Hungarian People's Republic is a state of workers and peasants', in which 'all power belongs to the

working people'. The Constitution changed the state form of the republic to a people's republic.

In 1950, after a lengthy and complex political struggle, relations between the state and the churches were regulated. After the political defeat of the extreme reactionary group of the Catholic clergy, led by Cardinal Mindszenty, the separation of the Church from the state was supplemented by an agreement in which the Catholic Church pledged its loyalty and agreed to accept the new social system.

The structural organization of the people's power was advanced by purging the state apparatus of civil servants under reactionary influence; within a few years, tens of thousands of workers and peasants were introduced into the state administrative apparatus and the officers corps of the people's army. A significant measure was adopted by the new government in the autumn of 1950; on the basis of the principles embodied in the Constitution of 1949, it introduced the system of local councils. The councils, elected by secret ballot to head the towns, villages and other administrative units, functioned through permanent committees to draw large masses of the population into public affairs and to supervise the administrative process.

Parallel with the measures for the organization of state power, in December 1949, industrial enterprises employing from 10 to 100 workers were also nationalized. With this action nearly all the means of production owned by the bourgeoisie became state property. Privately owned wholesale trade was also nationalized, and private retail trade was severely restricted. New credit and commercial organizations were rapidly set up. The socialist transformation of agriculture was begun in the later part of 1948 and was pursued with great vigour in 1950 and 1951, with the organization of the co-operative farms by individual peasant farmers.

The implementation of the Three Year Plan aimed at the restoration of the war-torn national economy was speeded up. By the end of 1949, that is, in not quite two and a half years, it not only reached its targets, but in many respects considerably exceeded them. By the end of the period of the plan, unemployment had ended in Hungary, and the workers' real wages exceeded the level of the last peace-time year. On the basis of these results, on 1 January 1950, the first Five Year Plan was inaugurated.

### Political and Economic Mistakes

Serious and detailed historical research into the period between 1948 and 1956 has not yet been undertaken. Here, however, a brief account of this era must be given. The period in question was characterized by two contradictory trends. On the one hand, there was a serious effort made to construct the bases of a socialist economy and society. On the other hand, coupled with these constructive efforts, enormous political and economic errors made their appearance. These faults cannot be singled out as special Hungarian phenomena. Rather they were the reflection of events in the Soviet Union and in the entire international workers' movement, and were the inevitable outcome of the mistaken conceptions accepted by the Cominform in 1948 and 1949. While they were not specifically Hungarian phenomena, there is no question that Mátyás Rákosi and his ruling circle even exceeded Stalin in their faulty interpretation of socialism and in their highly personalized rule.

In political life Stalinism meant that democracy was relegated to a meaningless position, that there was overcentralized, dictatorial rule and that legal norms were significantly and seriously breached. Naturally, these events were reflected in the entire life of the country. The so-called 'popular front' policy, i.e. the securing of co-operation between the working classes, became a mere formality. The parties which were members of the coalition were quickly liquidated. The serious violations of law, which affected vast segments of Hungarian society, created an atmosphere of mistrust and insecurity and encouraged withdrawal from public life. There were deviations from the Leninist norms of democracy in the internal life of the party as well. Consequently, there was no possibility of debating problems within the party and all opinions contrary to those of the leadership were quashed. The former leaders and members of the Social Democratic Party, with which the Communist Party fused in 1948, were no longer regarded as equal. Soon there began the lawless arrests of innocent people and the purge trials; a large number of Communists and Socialists were affected by these illegalities. The most serious breach of law was the arrest, trial and subsequent execution of László Rajk and many of his co-defendants in 1949. These trials were based entirely on false accusations and fabricated evidence.

In the economic sphere, the forced investment policy was disastrous. It brought low returns, and yet it utilized such large portions of the national income that the real wages and salaries of the working population significantly declined in 1951 and 1952. The overdevelopment of

heavy industry and especially of war industry drew off significant portions of the national income and led to serious disproportions in the allocation of the budget. The development of consumer industry lagged behind. The failure to supply the population adequately with consumer goods was accentuated by the forced and speedy abolition of small private industry. The most serious disproportions occurred between industrial and agrarian developments. The decrease in agricultural investment, the greatly exaggerated demands placed on the private peasant population for higher deliveries, and the forcible collectivization efforts led to stagnation in agriculture and to an actual decrease in the agrarian production of certain regions. Naturally, all these problems also played havoc with the food supply of the population.

The years between 1949 and 1953 encompassed a period during which the structure of society was transformed. The first Five Year Plan between 1950 and 1954 succeeded in industrializing the country: in five years industrial production grew by 130 per cent, heavy industrial production by 300 per cent and machine industry production by 350 per cent. Along with these developments, Hungarian society witnessed a re-stratification which altered the heavily agrarian character of pre-war Hungary. Even though industry paid low wages, it still absorbed the age-old surplus agrarian population and thus there was no longer any unemployment. By providing virtually free schooling and educational opportunities the state put an end to the workers' and peasants' isolation from culture. This progress, however, bore the mark of the dictatorial era in which it was born. The development of these progressive reforms was retarded by 'voluntarism', by the forced quantitative growth and by the total neglect of the human suffering caused by the rapid transformation of society.

In June 1953, there began a new era in political life; the Central Committee of the party recognized the mistakes that had been made earlier. Their recognition was closely connected with the new developments which took place in the Soviet Union and in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union following the death of Stalin. The repairing of the damage began in Hungary in June 1953. In the higher echelons of the party leadership Mátyás Rákosi and his clique were relegated to positions of lesser importance and Imre Nagy became the prime minister. The government began the revising of the economic plan. New measures were undertaken which slowed down the rate of industrial growth, stopped certain unwise investments, raised agrarian investments, increased support to private small peasants, and created a simpler and less dictatorial delivery system. Recognizing that the standard of living

must rise during the process of building socialism, the leadership initiated two price cuts within a short time, improved the system of mass transportation and took steps to build more apartments. At the same time, a moratorium was declared on the back taxes of the peasantry and on the fines assessed on the peasants for being in arrears. There began a slow process of ending the previous lawlessness and the rehabilitation of those unjustly tried and convicted. The steps taken curtailed the range of administrative measures and strengthened democracy in public life.

The recognition of the mistakes and the attempts to correct them, however, were not followed by healthy developments. The new line after June 1953 was supported by the population, and infused political life with new vitality. At the same time, however, it also caused a profound shock among the people of the country. In addition to expecting the correction of these errors and the setting of new tasks, they also demanded that the leadership experiment with hitherto untried methods and practices. These expectations and demands created, at the same time, two opposing views among the leadership regarding the recent past. On the one hand, the Rákosi clique, although at first startled by the criticism it had received, soon began minimizing its past mistakes, attempted to delay any change and tried to defend its old policies. On the other hand, a new 'revisionist' group searched for the solution in 'non-party' democracy and in fostering a nationalist attitude. The stubborn reluctance of the old leadership only helped the development of this second tendency: Rákosi and his supporters labelled as 'revisionist' all those efforts which attempted to correct the mistakes of the past. Under such circumstances the period between 1954 and 1956 was characterized by a struggle between these two tendencies. During these years, however, the real enemies of socialism also gained ground. Although the people were unaware of the internal struggle, they still felt the lack of confidence and the lack of planning in the contradictory day-to-day measures.

At the beginning of 1955, Rákosi and his supporters tried to regain their former leading positions. Their struggle against the so-called 'revisionist' group stemmed from a dogmatic ideological point of view. The decision of the Central Committee, in March 1955, to expel Imre Nagy from the party again, was followed by a host of measures returning the leadership to the policies they followed prior to 1953. These measures—for example the accelerated forced collectivization and the renewal of 'administrative measures'—strengthened the right wing again. Rákosi and his group also failed to draw the necessary conclusions from the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of

the Soviet Union, held in February 1956. By the summer of that year, when the Central Committee finally got around to analysing and applying the lessons of that Congress, the leadership was held in such low esteem and the strength of the opposing forces was so great that, despite the dismissal of Rákosi and other measures, the avalanche of events could no longer be stopped.

On 23 October 1956, armed uprising broke out in Hungary. The activities of the counter-revolutionary groups, nationalist sentiments supported by a significant percentage of the workers, lack of information and the rapid disorganization of the government, all threatened to crush the socialist system and its accomplishments. The new government, the composition of which changed almost daily, allowed ever greater play to the right-wing forces. Soon openly anti-socialist parties and organizations made their appearance, and those socialist forces which wanted to correct the mistakes of the past within the existing system continued to diminish in importance.

#### **The Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government. The Consolidation of the Socialist Regime**

On 4 November 1956, Radio Szolnok broadcast the news that on the previous day a Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government had been formed to reassert authority. The announcement also contained the news that the new government had requested military help from the Soviet Union.

The Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government took over the leadership in a very grave situation. The country presented a frightening picture of economic, political and ideological disruption. The cost of the damage resulting from the paralysis in production and the destruction of stocks of raw material and goods exceeded 20,000 million forints. Inflation and widespread unemployment threatened. The sense of paralysis could be felt not only in economic life but also in public morale; the events of October and November left behind them ideological confusion in the thinking of a considerable part of the population.

The Communists firmly dissociated themselves from the Rákosi clique's policy and also rejected revisionism. They formed the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, and János Kádár became the first secretary of the party's Central Committee. The party, pursuing a consistently anti-Stalinist policy, was able to rally to its support not only the forces that had been loyal to socialism in the past, but won the



confidence of most other sections of the population as well. As a result of this support and of the large-scale material aid from the Soviet Union and the rest of the socialist countries, the economic and political stability of the country was restored within a relatively brief period. In the third quarter of 1957, the production of state-owned industry was already higher than the peak prior to the counter-revolution. At the same time, the workers' living standard also rose considerably; in comparison to 1955 the real income of the wage and salary earners was up by 32 per cent, and compared with 1956 it had grown by 18 per cent. This extensive improvement in living standards did not yet have a firm economic foundation in 1957. The 32 per cent rise in real wages between 1955 and 1957, in which aid from the other socialist countries had played a considerable role, was accompanied by only a 5 per cent growth in industrial production. The party's leadership and the government worked out a three-year plan for the years from 1958 to the end of 1960, to raise living standards and ensure a further gradual but steady development. This plan was largely free from the earlier disproportions of economic development, and was in harmony with the country's requirements and resources.

The programme for a steady rise in the standard of living made necessary an increase in productivity and the universal application of large-scale production methods in agriculture. Following the adoption of this programme the process of organizing the peasantry into co-operative farms—but now with the observance of the voluntary principle—continued from the end of the 1950s. By the spring of 1961, about 90 per cent of the land and of the peasants belonged to co-operative farms and state farms, and this meant that essentially the socialist reorganization of agriculture had been completed.

In 1961, a new five-year plan of economic development was started. This plan envisaged, among other things, a further growth in the national income, an improvement in the people's living standards, and further changes in the structure of industry to make best use of its potential to suit the requirements of the people.

Within a few years the country recovered from the wounds of the counter-revolution. With the improvement in the living conditions of the people an atmosphere of calm and confidence began to prevail. Healthy debates on questions of public interest began to characterize the life of Hungarian society. A major contribution to the development of this kind of atmosphere was the strict enforcement of the rule of law and an unconditional respect for civil rights. The democratic character of the state was shown in livelier parliamentary debates and activities. These favourable developments were made possible by the

consistent policy of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, which maintained constant and direct contact with the people by an increased respect for work and professional knowledge, and by moderation and an avoidance of rhetoric. The party proclaimed that in its activities it welcomed as its allies all citizens who helped with their honest work in the realization of the aim of building the country. On this basis genuine national unity deepened, it became possible for the party to pursue a real people's front policy, and the Patriotic People's Front was no longer an empty framework.

The party's Eighth Congress in 1962 noted that the foundations for a socialist society had been laid in Hungary. On these foundations it set forth as its programme the completion of socialist construction, the large-scale development of the economy, science and culture and a further improvement of the people's living conditions.

### 3. TRANSFORMATION OF HUNGARY'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE DURING THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

During the twenty-five years between 1945 and 1970 Hungary was radically transformed. The major implications of this transformation can be assessed most objectively by the study of the country's economic and social structure today.

As far as the country's economy is concerned, its rate of growth speeded up considerably in comparison to the pre-war rate. Development was particularly rapid in industry, where the index of net production for state-owned industry rose greatly (see Table 1).

Table 1  
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN HUNGARY

Year	Index
1949	100
1953	216
1957	234
1962	394

Before the Second World War, the annual growth in industrial development in Hungary was hardly more than 1 per cent, which made her one of the slowest developing countries in Europe. From 1949, the annual industrial growth rate amounted to 10 per cent. Industrial production in 1962 was five and half times that of 1938 and four times that of 1949.

The growth in agricultural production does not reveal anywhere near such a favourable picture; taking the 15 years after 1949 as one period, it was characterized by stagnation, and the rate of development remained considerably behind that of the advanced capitalist countries (see Table 2).

Table 2  
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN HUNGARY

Year	Index
1949	100
1953	115
1957	124
1962	116

Despite the fact that this lag in agricultural development was a serious burden on the national economy, it was still unable to prevent the growth of the national income (see Table 3).

Table 3  
GROSS NATIONAL INCOME IN HUNGARY

Year	per cent
1949	100
1953	157
1957	180
1962	250

Consequently, in contrast to the 1.5 per cent growth in the national income as an annual average between the two world wars, after 1949 the national income rose by about 7 per cent every year.

The changes in the economic structure were also very significant. The most important was the country's rapid industrialization. In 1938, some 48-50 per cent of the wage-earners were engaged in agriculture and only 22 per cent worked in industry. By 1960, the proportion of agricultural wage-earners had dropped to 35 per cent, and that of industrial wage-earners had risen to 32 per cent. At the end of the 1930s, agriculture had contributed close to 40 per cent to the production of the national income, and industry only 35 per cent, but in 1963 agriculture's share was about 35 per cent, that of manufacturing 38 per cent and that of building industry 9 per cent. The structure of agricultural production also changed; the area sown to bread grains decreased, and the area producing such crops as maize, animal fodder and industrial crops expanded.

Economic development is reflected also in the trend in the people's living standards. Although between 1951 and 1953 there was a serious drop, yet during the period as a whole—even amidst the large-scale

and often swift economic transformations—the population's standard of living increased to a considerable extent (see Table 4).

Table 4  
THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN HUNGARY

	<i>Wage and Salary Earners</i>		<i>Peasants</i>	
	real wages per earner	per person	real wages per person	consumption
1949	100	100	100	100
1953	87	91	107	101
1957	140	149	132	137
1962	159	178	147	168

This living standard is still considerably behind that of the most advanced capitalist countries and also conceals other internal difficulties and contradictions, especially the fact that despite the wholesale levelling of wages, there remain great disparities between the living standards of different sections of the population. These disparities are not so much due to vocational or professional skills, as to the number of dependants of each wage-earner. Despite this, if we add in other factors that improve the living standards and security, such as full employment, the system of social and health insurance covering practically the entire population, and essentially free intermediate and higher education, development by contrast with pre-war Hungary is outstanding.

The class structure of society changed radically (see Table 5).

The data—as regards the class differentiation of the population—reveal the movement towards simplification. The capitalist class, never very significant in number, has disappeared, the class of small commodity producers, which under the effects of the 1945 land reform increased temporarily, has dropped to a few per cent, and there has been a substantial growth in the number of manual and office workers. The primary economic conditions for an integrated socialist peasant class came into existence. The summary figures cover a large number of other changes with important implications for the modernization of society. From among these it is worth emphasizing four features. One of them is the change in the character of the working class. Before 1945, the Hungarian working class was very backward on the whole: almost half of it was made up of the agricultural proletariat, and only a third were industrial workers. Forty per cent of the industrial work-

Table 5  
CLASS DIVISION OF HUNGARIAN SOCIETY, 1930-1962

Social class	Percentage of population		
	1930	1949	1962
Living on wages and salaries	58.0	49.0	70.0
manual workers	51.0	41.0	54.0
office workers, intelligentsia	7.0	8.0	16.0
Small commodity producers	32.0	45.0	5.0
Capitalists, big landowners	8.0	5.0	—
Co-operative farm workers	—	—	25.0
Others	2.0	1.0	—

ers were engaged in handicrafts industry. Between the years 1945 and 1962, as a result of the land reform, industrialization and collectivization, the number of agricultural workers shrank to 15 per cent of the total working class, whereas the size of the industrial working class more than doubled. Today two-thirds of the total population are industrial workers. The number of small craftsmen is now only a tiny fraction of the working class. There has been a great increase in the standard of vocational skill and education of the working class.

A second important feature is the transformation of the peasantry. The land reform carried out after the country's liberation brought the first great change, inasmuch as it ended landlessness, and turned the smallholding and middle peasantry into the most numerous section of the peasant class. The socialist transformation of agriculture between 1959 and 1961 fundamentally transformed these class relations. It also ended exploitation in the countryside, and turned 90 per cent of the peasantry into co-operative farmers. Among this new class of peasants the old and often rigid class distinctions, and the conflicts dividing the village that sprang from these distinctions, are being effaced to an ever increasing degree.

The third important feature is the great increase in intellectual and professional workers. This is due, above all, to the rapid growth in the

size of the intelligentsia, but also to the increase in the number of office workers which in some spheres has been too large to be economically sound.

Lastly, one of the most noteworthy features of the transformation of the social and class structure has been the ending of the old caste character of Hungarian society, which lacked a healthy mobility between the various classes. This social transformation took place amidst mass changes of occupation; for instance in Budapest alone, between 1949 and 1960, some 300,000 wage-earners, with their dependents more than half a million people, moved into a different social stratum. These changes in certain periods represented a serious shock to those whom they affected. Yet the collapse of the social barriers between the workers, the professional workers, the peasantry, the former bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie has laid the foundation for the development of a democracy more profound than mere formal democracy. Today the position of the members of society is being determined to an ever decreasing extent by the old class distinctions, and to an increasing degree by abilities, individual inclinations and ambitions.

*Magyar mounted  
warrior on a vessel  
from the  
Nagyszentmiklós  
Treasure  
(10th century)*



*Silver sabretache plate  
(from Galgóc,  
10th century)*



*10th-century Magyar chieftain's sword (the "Sword of Charlemagne", Vienna)*

*The Roman military amphitheatre of Aquincum; Chief Kurszán's campsite in the 10th century*



*Depiction of the conquest of Hungary in the Képes Krónika (Illuminated Chronicle) (14th century)*



*Head of a royal statue from Kalocsa Cathedral, probably representing St. Stephen (early 13th century)*





*St. Stephen's silver denarius (obverse and reverse)*

*Sarcophagus of St. Stephen (Székesfehérvár Cathedral)*



*Entrance to the chapel of Béla III's palace in Esztergom (end of 12th century)*



*Main portal of the church at Ják (mid-13th century)*

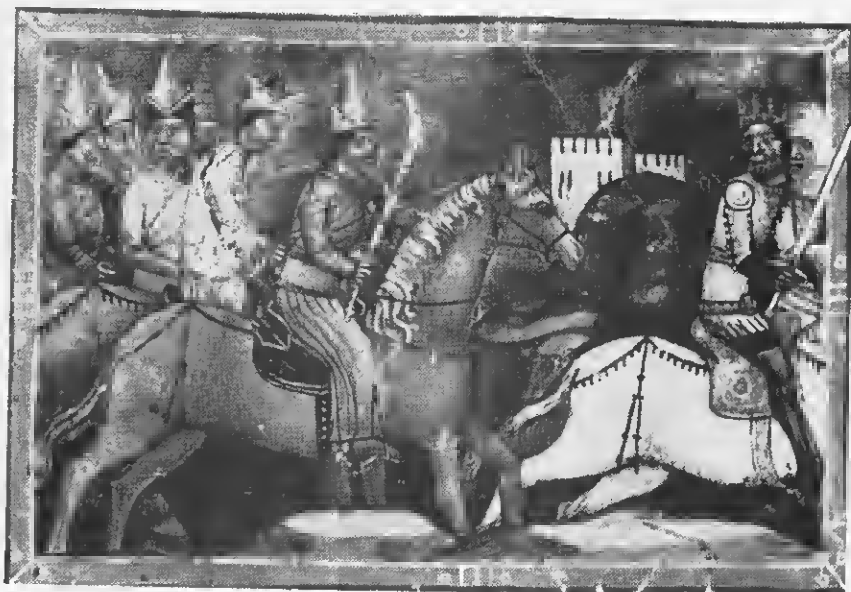


*Seal of King Andrew II's  
Golden Bull  
(obverse and reverse)*



*Seal of the Esztergom Latins (first half of the 13th century)*

*Depiction of the Mongolian invasion in the Illuminated Chronicle (14th century)*



*Béla IV's keep  
at Visegrád (c. 1245)*





*St. Ladislas's reliquary bust (herma) in Győr Cathedral  
(work of the Kolozsvári brothers, end of 14th century)*

*The replica of the Bautzen monument to King Matthias in the Castle Hill  
District of Buda ▷*







*View of Buda at the end of the 15th century  
(engraving in the Schedel Chronicle)*

*15th-century burghers' houses in Buda (photograph)*

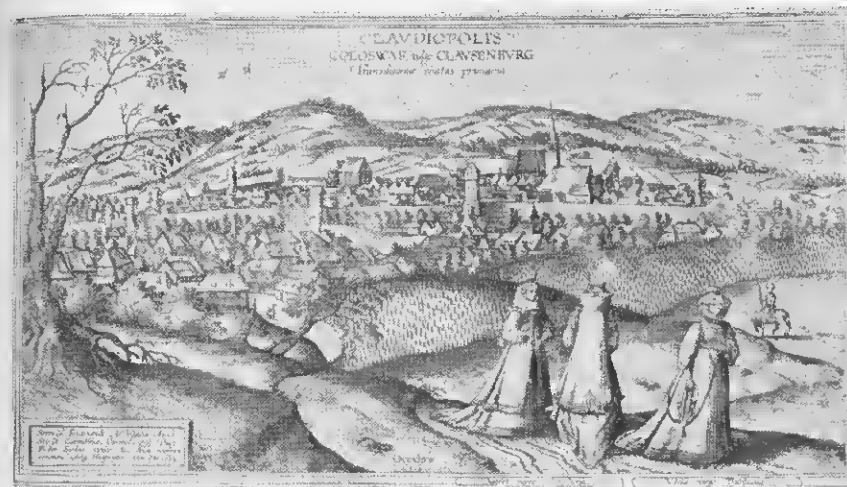


*The 13th-century keep and 16th-century loggia of Sárospatak Castle*





*Hungarian-Turkish joust (contemporary engraving)*



*View of Kolozsvár*

*István Bocskai among his heyducks (engraving by W. P. Zimmermann)*



*and Kassa, in the early 17th century (engravings by Georg Hufnagel)*



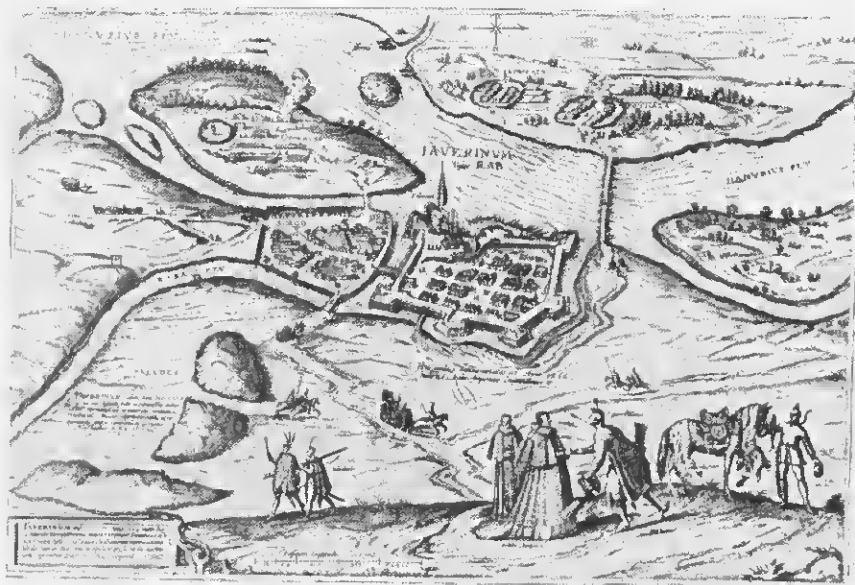


*Gábor Bethlen (engraving)*



*Miklós Zrínyi (engraving)*

*View of Győr, at the end of the 16th century (engraving by Georg Hufnagel)*



*Ferenc Rákóczi II (painting by Ádám Mányoki)*



18th-century baroque townscape  
in Eger (Káptalansor)

The Esterházy mansion at Fertőd (mid-18th century)



Execution of Ignác Martinovics and his associates on the Vérmező (Bloodfield)  
in Buda

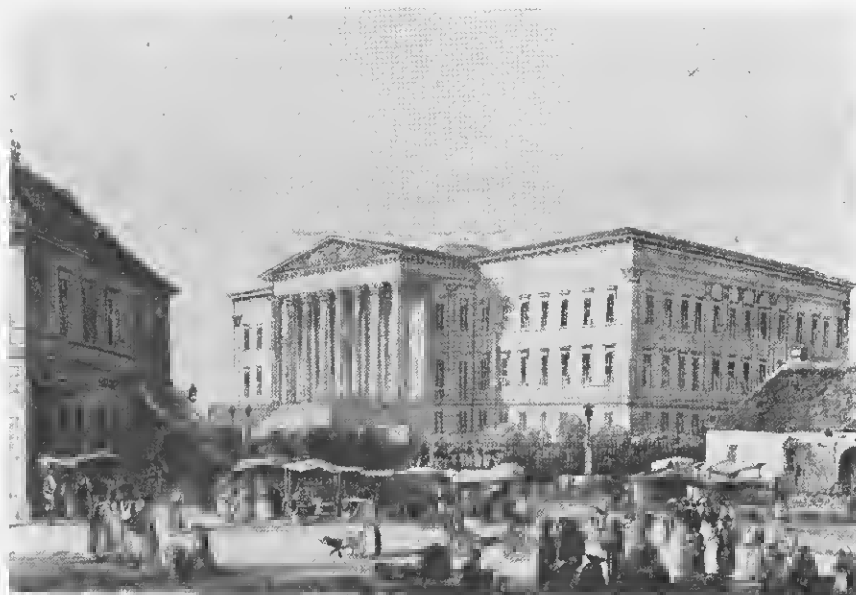


Portrait of István Széchenyi  
(lithograph by Daffinger-  
Kriehuber)

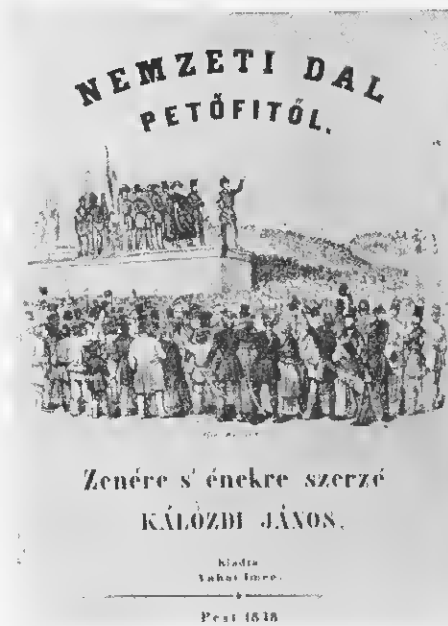
*Portrait of Lajos Kossuth  
(lithograph by Eibel)*



*The Hungarian  
National Museum  
(lithograph  
by Alt-Sandmann)*



*Sándor Petőfi recites  
his "National Ode"  
on 15 March 1848  
(title-page of a pamphlet)*



*The first independent government of Hungary (1848)*





*The recapture of Buda Castle in 1849 (painting by Mór Than)*

*The martyrs of Arad*



*The arrival of Lajos Kossuth in Southampton (lithograph by Steckmest)*



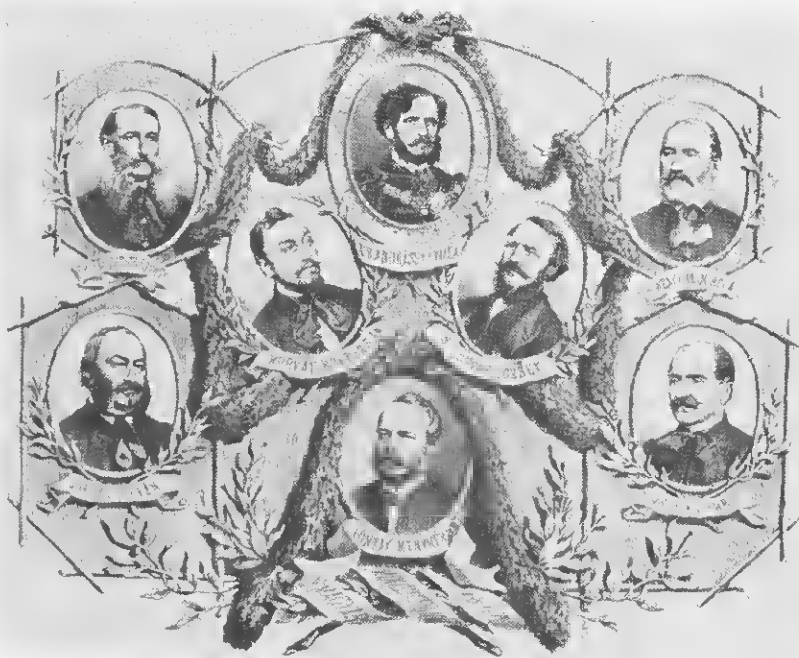
*Ferenc Deák  
(lithograph by J.  
Marastoni)*





*László Teleki (lithograph by  
Ágost Láncezi)*

*Members of the 1867 government*



*Leó Frankel*



*Károly Farkas*



*Kálmán Tisza's taroc party (painting by A. Ferraris)*

Parliament House



*Bloody May Day demonstration  
at Orosháza (title-page of the  
Politisches Volksblatt)*

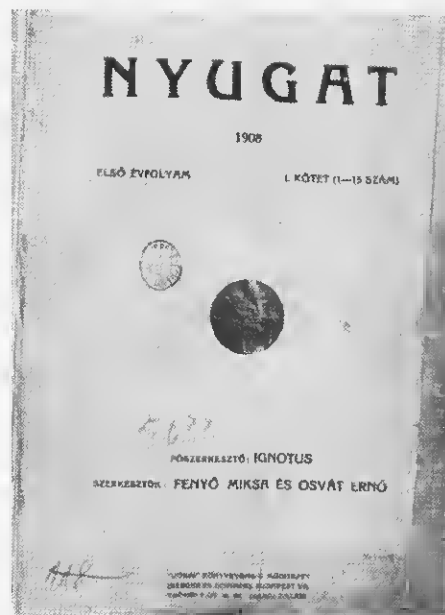


*János Szántó Kovács before the court*





*Endre Ady*



*Title-page of the first  
volume of Nyugat*

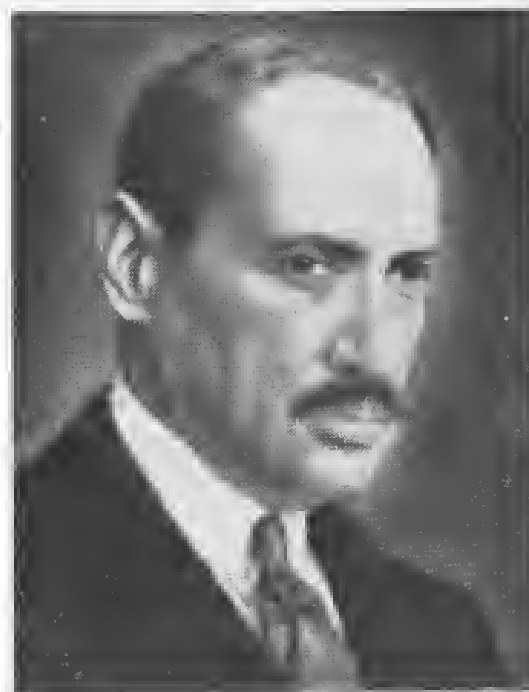
*Oszkár Jászi*



*Eryin Szabó*



*István Tisza*



*Mihály Károlyi*

*Gendarmes guard the demonstrators arrested on 23 May 1912*



*Soldiers demonstrating in the streets of Budapest on 31 October 1918*





*Béla Kun*

*Jenő Landler*



*Tibor Szamuely*



*Voters at the polls. Election of Councils in April 1919*

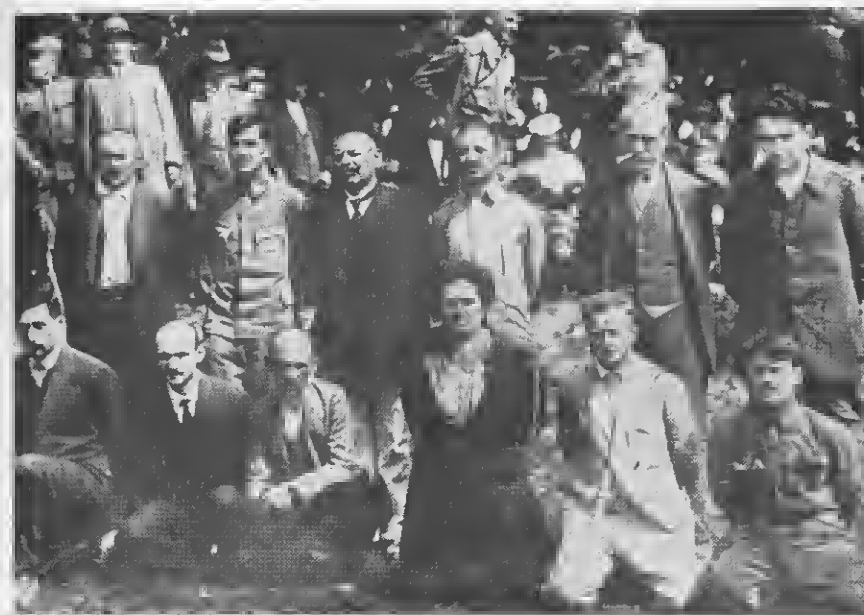
*First exhibition of works of art taken into public ownership*







*May Day 1919  
(poster by Mihály Biró)*

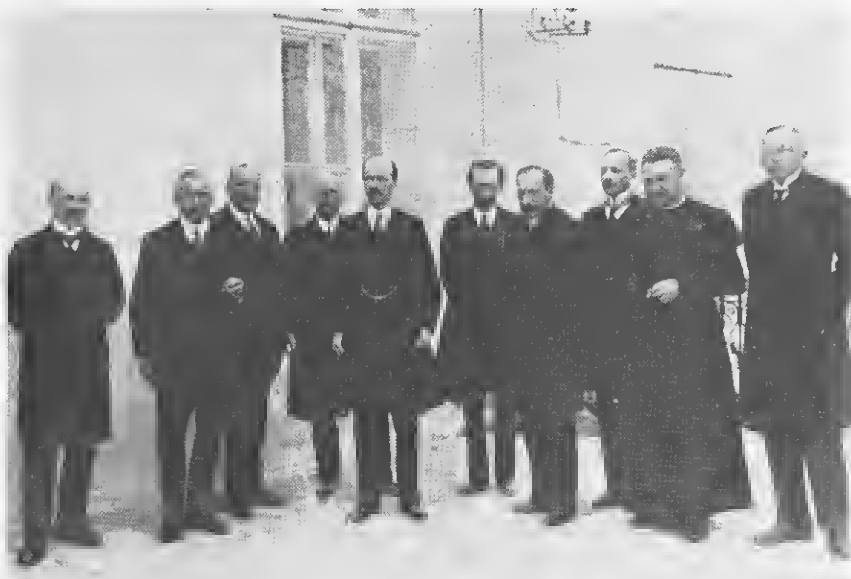


*Members of the Szekszárd directory before their execution*

*"To Arms!" (poster by Róbert Berény)*



*Miklós Horthy marches into Budapest on 16 November 1919*



*Bethlen's first government*

*Navvies waiting for employment in Budapest*



*Public demonstration on 1 September 1930*

*Imre Sellai*



*Sándor Fürst*





*The Gömbös government*

*Kálmán Darányi, Gömbös's successor, with Mussolini*



*Béla Bartók*



*Attila József*





*Horthy and Hitler in 1938*

*Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky*



*Pál Teleki visiting Mussolini*



*Demonstration by the statue of Petöfi in March 1942*





*Hungarian troops at the Eastern front*

*The first deportations from Hungary*



*Zoltán Schönherz*



*Endre Ságvári*







*Ferenc Szálasi with his Arrow-Cross henchmen*

*Victims of the  
Arrow-Cross atrocities*



*Soviet troops fighting in Budapest's Great Boulevard*

*Budapest in the spring of 1945*





*Teaching begins in the ruined school buildings*

*Distribution of land*



*Mass meeting in front  
of Parliament on 1 February  
1946 for the proclamation  
of the republic*



*Delegates marching to  
the Unification Congress of the  
Hungarian Communist Party  
and the Social Democratic  
Party in 1948*





*Parliament in session  
in January 1958*



*The Eighth Congress  
of the Hungarian  
Socialist Workers'  
Party in 1962*

## COMPARATIVE CHRONOLOGY

1st millennium B.C. The Finno-Ugric period of the Hungarian people  
5th century B.C.-1st century A.D. The Hungarian tribes adopt a nomadic life; herding on horseback  
9 B.C. The Romans conquer Pannonia  
5th-8th century A.D. Hun, subsequently Avar rule in the Carpathian Basin  
8th-9th century A.D. The Hungarian tribes under Khazar rule

791-796 Charlemagne's campaigns against the Avars. Pannonia a Frankish margravate  
early 9th century The Hungarian tribes become independent

5th century The Romans evacuate Britain because of the repeated attacks of the Anglo-Saxons  
500-540 New conquests by the Anglo-Saxons; the founding of the seven kingdoms  
595 The arrival of St. Augustine and the establishment of Benedictine monasteries

787 Appearance of the first marauding groups of Danes  
802-839 Egbert, King of Wessex, unites the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms

839	Under the pressure of attacks from the Pechenegs the Hungarians, together with a number of Kabars, withdraw to Etelköz, east of the Don	871-899	Alfred the Great successfully opposes the Danish advance
892	The Hungarians appear in Pannonia as allies of King Arnulf		
895	The Pechenegs and their Bulgar allies raid Etelköz		
896-900	The Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin, under the leadership of Kurszán ( <i>kende</i> ) and Árpád ( <i>gyula</i> )		
897	The Hungarians occupy the Ostmark		
899-970	Marauding expeditions in Western Europe and the Balkans		
933	The Hungarians suffer a defeat at Merseburg	924-939	Victories by Athelstan over the Danes
955	A Hungarian defeat at Augsburg (Lechfeld); restoration of the Ostmark	959-975	Edgar rules over the whole of England
972-997	The rule of Prince Géza; organization of the feudal state; settlement in the country of German missionary priests and knights	978-1016	Introduction of feudal institutions under Eitbhed II
997-1038	Reign of (St.) Stephen I; establishment of the feudal state and the Christian church		
998	Suppression of Koppány's revolt		
1000	Coronation of Stephen I	1016-1035	Canute the Great, King of Denmark, extends his rule over England
1002-1003	Overthrow of Ajtony and the <i>gyula</i> of Transylvania		
1030	Emperor Conrad II attacks Hungary and is defeated		
1038-1041 and 1044-1046	Reign of Peter Orscolo		

1041-1044	Reign of Samuel Aba; German attack	1042-1066	Edward III (the Confessor); fighting between the Normans and the Anglo-Saxons
1046	Vata's pagan rising		
1046-1060	Reign of Andrew I; the end of German suzerainty; defeat of Emperor Henry III	1066	As a result of the Battle of Hastings, William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy, conquers England
1060-1063	Reign of Béla I		
1061	Pagan rising of Vata's son János	1086	Great inventory of lands in England (Domesday Book)
1063-1074	Rule of Salomon; dynastic strife	1100-1135	Henry I (Normandy a possession of the king of England)
1074-1077	Reign of Géza I; rejection of papal feudal claims	1107	The king of England relinquishes his right of investiture
1077-1095	Reign of (St.) Ladislav I; conquest of Slavonia; wars with the Cumans; dispute with the papacy over Croatia	1135-1154	Civil war with Mathilda during the rule of Stephen of Blois
1095-1116	Rule of Koloman (Beaulere); submission of Croatia and Dalmatia; agreement with the papacy	1154-1189	Henry II (founder of the House of Plantagenet)
1116-1131	Rule of Stephen II; wars with Venice	1171	Campaign against Ireland
1131-1141	Rule of Béla II (the Blind); expansion in the Balkans	1173-1174	Henry II's sons rebel against their father
1142-1162	Rule of Géza II; Saxon settlements in Transylvania; struggle against Byzantine expansion	1189-1199	Richard the Lionheart (Cœur de Lion)
1162-1172	Rule of Stephen III; rival kings (Ladislav II, Stephen IV) enjoy Byzantine support		
1173-1196	Rule of Béla III; organization of the chancery; strengthening of the great secular landowners; the first fiefs granted from the royal estates and counties		
1196-1204	Reign of Emeric; internecine strife		

1202-1204	Zara in the hands of the Crusaders and Venetians	1199-1216	John I (Lackland)
1204-1205	Reign of Ladislav III	1202-1204	Wars against France; the king of England loses the greater part of his French possessions
1205-1235	Reign of Andrew II; weakening of central power; strengthening of papal influence	1214	French victory at Bouvines
1211	The Order of Teutonic Knights invited into Transylvania, then driven out	1215, 15 June	Magna Carta
1217-1218	Andrew II in the Holy Land; the Fifth Crusade	1216-1272	King Henry III
1222	The Golden Bull issued		
1231	Renewal of the Golden Bull; temporary strengthening of the power of the Church		
1235-1270	Rule of Béla IV; attempt to restore the county system		
1239	Cuman settlement		
1241-1242	The Mongolian invasion; devastation of the country, and subsequent reconstruction		
1254	Division of the inheritance of the deceased Babenbergs between Béla IV and Ottokar II; Styria under Hungarian rule until 1259	1264, May	In the Battle of Lewes Simon de Montfort defeats the royal armies (Henry III in captivity), and becomes ruler of England; beginnings of parliament
1267	County delegates at the diet; the first steps towards organizing the nobility	1265, August	Simon de Montfort is defeated in the Battle of Evesham and dies
1270-1272	Rule of Stephen V; the emergence of feudal anarchy		

1272-1290	Rule of Ladislav IV (the Cuman); his struggle to strengthen royal power against the barons and the Church	1272-1307	Reign of Edward I
1290-1301	Rule of Andrew III; disintegration of the central authority; recognition of the serfs' right to move freely	1276-1284	Campaigns and conquest of Wales
1301-1308	The struggle between Wenceslas Přemysl, Otto von Wittelsbach and Charles of Anjou for the Hungarian throne; feudal anarchy at its height	1285-1307	Edward I's struggles for the throne of Scotland
1308-1342	Rule of Charles Robert (Anjou); suppression of the oligarchs, strengthening of central power	1294-1303	Edward I's wars in France
1335	Congress of Visegrád; Hungarian-Bohemian-Polish concord and trade alliance against Vienna's staple right	1307-1327	Edward II
1342-1382	Rule of Louis I (the Great); the peak and decline of Hungary's orientation in foreign policy towards the Adriatic	1327-1377	Edward III
1347-1348	First Neapolitan campaign of Louis I	1348	The Black Death
1349	The Black Death in Hungary		
1350	Second Neapolitan campaign of Louis I	1351-1353	Decrees of Edward III to limit papal power
1351	Legislative concessions made to the nobles; introduction of the 'ninth'; entailment	1375-1384	Wycliff's movement
1356-1358	War with Venice; Dalmatia secured		
1367	Founding of the University of Pécs		
c. 1370	Establishment of the first guilds, and rise of the towns		
1370-1382	Louis I King of Poland		



1378-1381	War with Venice; Peace of Turin	1377-1397	Richard II
1382-1387	Mary, consort of Sigismund of Luxemburg, Queen of Hungary	1381	The peasants' revolt led by Wat Tyler
1385-1386	Rule of Charles II (the Small)		
1387	Sigismund of Luxemburg crowned king as co-regent with his wife; he rules until 1437	1399	Armistice concluded with France
1401	Sigismund forms a league with the Garai-Cilli faction, to which he cedes the right of government	1399-1413	Henry of Lancaster (Henry IV) usurps the throne
1404	<i>ius placetum regis</i> ; proclamation of papal decrees subjected to royal consent		
1405	Sigismund convenes the delegates of the towns; the walled towns granted charters of liberty	1413-1422	The war against France renewed under the reign of Henry V
1408	The founding of the Order of the Dragon; members of the Order monopolize the country's government	1422-1461	Henry VI
1416	The first Turkish attacks on Hungary		
1420	The Dalmatian towns come under Venetian rule		
1428	The Turks besiege the fortress of Galambóc		
1428-1433	Hussite incursions into Hungary, Hussite rebellions		
1435	In the diet the nobility demand a share in government		
1436-1437	Jacob of Marchia, the inquisitor, active in the south of the country		
1437	Peasant revolt led by Antal Budai Nagy in Transylvania		

1438-1439	Reign of (Emperor) Albert of Habsburg; the king joins forces with the nobility against the barons	1453	The Hundred Years' War ends
1440-1444	Rule of Wladislas I (Jagiello); the Turkish threat; the Habsburg faction gains control of some parts of the country	1455-1485	Wars of the Roses
1440	Strengthening of the nobility's political rights; no legislation can be adopted without their consent		
1442	János Hunyadi's victory against the Turks in Wallachia		
1444	Hunyadi defeated at Varna by the Turks: Wladislas I dies in battle	1461-1483	Edward IV (House of York)
1444-1457	Rule of Ladislas V (Habsburg); he lives abroad under the guardianship of Frederick III until 1452	1471	At Barnet Edward IV defeats the Lancastrian claimants to the throne
1446-1452	János Hunyadi Regent		
1448	Hunyadi's defeat at the hands of the Turks on the Plain of Kossovo		
1453	Ladislas V assumes power. The struggle of the Garai-Cilli and Hunyadi factions for power		
1456, 4-22 July	Defence of Nándorfehérvár (Belgrade)		
1456, 11 August	Death of Hunyadi		
1457	Execution of László Hunyadi, imprisonment of Mátyás (Matthias) Hunyadi		
1458-1490	Rule of Matthias I (Hunyadi); with the support of the nobility, Matthias endeavours to bolster central power; government by officials; mercenary army		
1468-1471	Matthias's campaigns in Bohemia; attempt at absolutism		
1474-1478	War against the Bohemian-Polish alliance; Peace of Olmütz; Matthias retains Moravia and Silesia		

1477 Matthias's first war against Austria	1483-1485 Richard III
1472-1477 The first Hungarian printing press in Buda	1485 In the Battle of Bosworth Henry Tudor defeats Richard III
1482-1487 Matthias's second war against Frederick III	1485-1509 Henry VII (Tudor) initiates the development of absolute monarchy
1485, 1 January Occupation of Vienna	1509-1547 Henry VIII
1486 The nobility turns against absolutism; the palatinate law; the elected palatine protects the rights of the nobility	
1490-1516 Rule of Wladislas II (Jagiello); the nobles gain ascendancy over royal authority	
1505 Decision of the diet at Rakos to hold a free election for a king, excluding the possibility of a foreign ruler	
1505 Mutual Habsburg-Jagiello treaty of succession	
1514 Peasant war in Hungary led by György Dózsa	
1514 Werbóczy's book of laws, the <i>Tripartitum</i>	
1516-1526 Rule of Louis II (Jagiello); internecine strife between the barons and the nobility; Zápolyai and Werbóczy at the head of the nobility	
1521 Szabács (Šabac) and Belgrade fall into Turkish hands	
1526, 29 August The Battle of Mohács; Louis II dies	
1526 Election of two kings in Hungary: János Zápolyai on 11 November (1526-1540), and Ferdinand Habsburg on 16 December (1526-1564)	
1529 Suleiman the Magnificent takes Zápolyai under his protection and fruitlessly besieges Vienna	
1532, 10-19 August Miklós Jurisich holds up the Sultan's forces at Kőszeg on their way to Vienna	1534 Henry VIII establishes the Church of England

1540-1570 Rule of the elected king, John Sigismund (Zápolyai), in the eastern regions; Turkish protectorate	1547-1553 Edward VI; organization of Protestantism
1541, 29 August The Turks occupy Buda; the country is split into three parts	
1542 The German imperial army unsuccessfully besieges Buda	1553-1558 Catholic reaction under the reign of Bloody Mary
1551 Castaldo in Transylvania; John Sigismund abdicates; the assassination of Martinuzzi	1558-1603 Reign of Elizabeth I
1552 Turkish campaigns against the Hungarian border fortresses; Eger unsuccessfully besieged by the Turks between 9 September and 18 October	
1556 Formation of a war council in Vienna; the construction of Hungarian border fortresses	
1556 Return of John Sigismund to Transylvania; restoration of the Eastern Hungarian Kingdom as a Turkish protectorate	
1564-1576 Rule of Maximilian (as Emperor Maximilian II); the Hungarian nobility resist absolutism	
1566 Suleiman's last campaign in Hungary; the fall of Szigetvár on 8 September	
1568 The Peace of Adrianople	
1570 Revolt of György Karácsony	
1570 Treaty of Speyer; the Eastern Hungarian Kingdom is transformed into the Principality of Transylvania	
1571-1586 István Báthory becomes Prince of Transylvania (King of Poland 1576-1586)	
1576-1608 Rudolf Habsburg (as Emperor Rudolf II, 1576-1612) rules in Hungary	
1581-1602 Zsigmond Báthory Prince of Transylvania	

- 1584 The first English colony established in North America (Virginia)  
 1587 Execution of Mary Stuart  
 1588 Defeat of the Spanish Armada
- 1600 Founding of the East India Company
- 1603-1625 James I, King of England, Scotland and Ireland

- 1591-1606 The 'Long' or Fifteen Years War against the Turks  
 1595 Transylvania's alliance with the Habsburgs against the Turks; victory over the Turks in Wallachia  
 1596 Turkish victory at Mezökeresztes; the fall of Eger  
 1598 Zsigmond Báthory hands Transylvania over to the Habsburg king
- 1601-1604 Basta's reign of terror in Transylvania
- 1604-1606 István Bocskai's war of independence against the Habsburgs  
 1605 Bocskai grants the heyduck settlers the freedom enjoyed by the nobles  
 1606, 23 September Peace of Vienna between Bocskai and the Vienna court; Bocskai rules in Transylvania (1604-1606)  
 1606, 11 November Peace of Zsitvatorok with the Turks  
 1606-1608 Zsigmond Rákóczi Prince of Transylvania  
 1607-1608 Rebellion of the heyducks; deposition of Rudolf  
 1608 The diet: the Hungarian nobility triumph in opposition; laws against the serfs and towns  
 1608-1619 Rule of King Matthias II (as Emperor 1612-1618); successes of the Counter-Reformation  
 1608-1613 Gábor Báthory Prince of Transylvania  
 1613-1629 Gábor Bethlen Prince of Transylvania; mercantilist economic policy, centralized government

- 1619 Bethlen declares war on the Habsburgs and besieges Vienna with his allies  
 1619-1637 Rule of Emperor Ferdinand II  
 1621 The diet in Besztercebánya elects Bethlen King of Hungary  
 1622 Peace of Nikolsburg: seven counties belong to Bethlen for the term of his life; the confirmation of the Peace of Vienna  
 1623 Bethlen's second campaign  
 1624 The second Peace of Vienna
- 1626 Bethlen's third campaign; Peace of Pozsony
- 1630-1648 György Rákóczi I Prince of Transylvania  
 1631-1632 Revolt of the peasant counties of Upper Hungary led by Péter Császárt  
 1635 Péter Pázmány establishes the University of Nagyszombat  
 1637-1657 Rule of Emperor Ferdinand III
- 1639 The beginning of the Hungarian Puritan movement
- 1644-1645 Campaign of György Rákóczi I, in alliance with the Swedes; Peace of Linz: religious freedom of the serfs  
 1645 Laws against the towns passed at the Hungarian diet
- 1648-1660 György Rákóczi II Prince of Transylvania

- 1625-1649 Charles I
- 1628 The Petition of Right assented to  
 1629-1640 The rule of royal autocracy
- 1638 The Scots rebel against Archbishop Laud's reforms of the Church of England
- 1640, April-May The 'Short' Parliament  
 1640, November The 'Long' Parliament convened  
 1642-1648 Civil war
- 1645, 14 June Cromwell's victory at Naseby  
 1646 Abolition of feudal restrictions on the nobility's landed property
- 1648, 3 August-1650, 19 May Cromwell's campaign in Ireland

1649, 30 January Charles I beheaded  
 19 May England constitutionally a republic  
 1651 Conquest of Scotland  
 1651 Navigation Act  
 1652-1654 English-Dutch trade war  
 1653, 12 December Cromwell designated Lord Protector  
 1655 Jamaica an English colony

1658, 3 September Cromwell's death

1660-1685 Reign of Charles II

1664-1667 English-Dutch war; occupation of Nieuw Amsterdam (New York)

1672-1674 English-Dutch war  
 1673 Test Act

1655 Increasing opposition by the Hungarian nobles; Miklós Zrínyi heads the opposition in the diet  
 1657 Failure of Rákóczi's Polish campaign  
 1657-1705 Rule of Emperor Leopold I  
 1658-1661 Struggle for the throne in Transylvania; reigns of Ákos Barscay, Ferenc Rhédey and János Kemény; the Turks ravage Transylvania

1661-1690 Mihály Apafi Prince of Transylvania

1663 Turkish campaign against Hungary; fall of Érsekújvár

1664, 20 January-9 February Miklós Zrínyi's winter campaign

1664, 1 August Battle of Szentgotthárd

10 August The Peace of Vasvár leaves Turkish conquest intact; dissatisfaction in Hungary; the palatine, Wesselényi, organizes a conspiracy

1670 Péter Zrínyi and his associates revolt

1671 Zrínyi, Frangepán and Nádasdy executed; Ferenc Rákóczi I ransomed; military occupation of Hungary

1672 Organization of the 'refugees' in Transylvania; the beginning of the *kuruc* liberation struggle

1678-1686 Imre Thököly's *kuruc* principality in northern Hungary

1679 Parliament accepts the Habeas Corpus Act  
 1681-1685 Parliament in abeyance  
 1685-1688 James II

1688, 5 November The army sides with William of Orange: the 'Glorious Revolution'  
 1689-1702 William III; with the acceptance of the Bill of Rights, England becomes a constitutional kingdom

1694 Establishment of the Bank of England

1701 The Act of Succession  
 1702-1714 Reign of Anne; capture of Gibraltar, Minorca, and several Spanish colonies in the West Indies

1686, 21 June-2 September Siege of Buda and its recapture from the Turks; the fall of Thököly

1687 The diet in Pozsony recognizes the Habsburgs' hereditary right to the throne

1687 Transylvania comes under Habsburg rule

1691 Diploma Leopoldinum: Transylvania an independent principality under Habsburg rule

1697 The *kuruc* rebellion in the Tokaj region

1697, 11 September Eugene of Savoy wins a decisive victory over the Turks in the Battle of Zenta

1699, 26 January Peace of Karlowitz; Hungary liberated from Turkish rule

1703, 6 May Ferenc Rákóczi II proclaims in Brezan the fight for freedom

July-October Campaign in the Trans-Tisza region

1704 Diet in Gyulafehérvár elects Ferenc Rákóczi II Prince of Transylvania

1705-1711 Rule of Emperor Joseph I

1705 Diet of Szécsény; Hungarian confederation of Estates; Ferenc Rákóczi II Reigning Prince

- 1848, 15 March The revolution breaks out in Pest; the demands for bourgeois reform set out in twelve clauses
- 1848, 7 April The formation of the Batthyány government, the first autonomous Hungarian government
- 1848, 5 July The opening of the parliament with popular representation
- 1848, 11 July Kossuth asks the parliament for 200,000 recruits and 42 million forints
- 1848, 31 August After crushing the Italian uprising, the Habsburg monarch attempts to restrict the activities of the autonomous Hungarian ministries of finance and defence
- 1848, 10 September The Batthyány government resigns
- 1848, 16 September Formation of the National Defence Commission
- 1848, 29 September Jelačić suffers defeat in the battle of Pákozd, and concludes an armistice
- 1848, 30 October Hungarian troops delay in giving help to the uprising in Vienna and are defeated at Schwechat
- 1848, 2 December–1916, 21 November The reign of Francis Joseph I
- 1848, 13 December Windischgrätz, the imperial Commander in Chief, crosses the Hungarian border
- 1849, 1–5 January The evacuation of Pest and Buda; the parliament moves to Debrecen
- 1849, March–April The spring campaign, with considerable victories
- 1849, 14 April The Declaration of Independence proclaims the detachment of the Habsburgs, and the establishment of an independent Hungary
- 1849, 23–24 April Pest liberated by Hungarian troops

1848, 10 April The 'People's Charter' tabled in parliament

- 1849, 26 April Francis Joseph turns to the Russian Czar for help
- 1849, 1 May The formation of the Szemere government
- 1849, 4–21 May The siege of Buda and its liberation
- 1849, 15–18 June The Russian armies cross the Hungarian frontier
- 1849, 11 August Lajos Kossuth resigns; Arthur Görgey assumes full power
- 1849, 13 August The capitulation at Világos
- 1849, 31 August–1851, 11 September Kossuth in Turkey
- 1849, August–1850, 8 July General Haynau's reign of terror in Hungary
- 1849, 6 October The execution of Lajos Batthyány and 13 leading generals of the War of Independence, the 13 'martyrs of Arad'
- 1849, 24 October–18 November The introduction of an absolutist system of administration
- 1851, 5 December–1852, 14 July Kossuth tours the United States
- 1851, 31 December Proclamation of the 'Principles of Government' and open absolutism
- 1852, 24 January Discovery of the József Mack conspiracy
- 1853, 18 February János Libényi's attempt on the life of Francis Joseph
- 1853, 2 March Urharia Patent issued
- 1855, 18 August Concordat between Austria and the Holy See
- 1859, 26 April War between Austria and French-backed Piedmont
- 1859, 5 May Formation of the Kossuth-Klapka-Telcki Hungarian National Directorate in exile
- 1859, July Széchenyi's pamphlet against the neo-absolutist system ('Eln Blicsk...')
- 1859, 11 July The Villafranca armistice agreement

1852–1854 Completion of the conquest of India and Burma

1854 The American Republican Party formed



1705	János Bottyán's Transdanubian campaign	
1706	Liberation of Transylvania; defence of Transdanubia	
1707	The diet in Ónod declares the dethronement of the Habsburgs. The internal crisis of the liberation struggle	
1708	Rákóczi loses the Battle of Trencsén	
1711, 30 April	Peace of Szatmár; compromise between Habsburg absolutism and the Hungarian nobles	
1711-1740	Rule of Charles III (as Emperor Charles VI)	1714-1727 Reign of George I of Hanover; personal union with Hanover
		1721-1742 Robert Walpole Prime Minister
1722	Sándor Károlyi founds the first cloth factory, Pál Lányi builds the first foundry	
1722-1723	The Hungarian diet accepts the Pragmatica Sanctio and the hereditary right of the female line of the Habsburg family	1727-1760 George II
1724	The Hungarian Governing Council reorganized	
1731	Carolina Resolutio; non-Catholic religious freedom restricted; non-Catholics barred from holding public office	
1732-1741	Francis of Lorraine Governor General of Hungary	
1740-1780	Rule of Maria Theresa	
1754, 1 October	Maria Theresa's customs decree; attempt to exploit Hungary as a colony	1757-1784 Robert Clive and Warren Hastings conquer India
1759	The first Hungarian coal mine opened at Brennberg	
1760	The founding of the Vienna <i>Staatsrat</i> ; the beginning of an enlightened policy	1760-1820 George III
1763	A Collegium Oeconomicum established at Szempc (Szenc)	1763 Peace of Paris; acquisition of Canada and Louisiana

1764	The Hungarian diet rejects the Viennese court's proposal to tax the nobility and regulate feudal services	
1765	Peasant uprising in Transdanubia	
1767	Maria Theresa's Urbairial Patent: regulation of the minimum size of peasant land holdings and the serfs' maximum labour services; transformation of peasant land into demesne prohibited	1769 Watt's first patent for a steam-engine
1770	Academy of Mining established at Selmecbánya	1770 Seizure of Australia
1773	The Jesuit order proscribed in Hungary	
1777	The University moves from Nagyszombat to Pest; Ratio Educationis	
1780	Sámuel Tessedik opens his farming school at Szarvas	
1780-1790	Rule of Joseph II; attempt to build a centralized administration, in the spirit of enlightened and physiocratic principles	
1781	Edict of Tolerance; the right of non-Catholics to practise their religion freely, their right to hold office	
1782	Founding of a University Engineering Institute in Pest	1783 Loss of the colonies in North America
1785	Decree of Joseph II reorganizing the public administration in Hungary. Abolition of perpetual serfdom	
1785-1787	The first official census	
1786	Rumanian peasant insurrection in Transylvania	
1790, 28 January	Joseph II revokes his edicts, with the exception of those on religious tolerance and serfdom	
1790-1792	Rule of Leopold II	
1792-1835	Rule of Francis I	
1794, May	Ignác Martinovics begins to organize his Jacobin conspiracy	
1794, July-August	The arrest of Martinovics, Hajnóczy, Laczkovics and Szentmarjay	

- 1795, 20 May Execution of the Jacobin leaders
- 1802 Founding of the Hungarian National Museum
- 1805, 13 October Laws published in Hungarian and Latin; the first achievement in the struggle for the recognition of the Hungarian language
- 1809, 15 May Napoleon's proclamation to the Hungarians urging them to break away from the Habsburgs
- 1809, 14 June In the battle of Győr Napoleon defeats the army of the Hungarian nobles
- 1811 Devaluation of the currency
- 1818 Establishment of an agricultural school at Magyaróvár
- 1819 Sándor Kőrösi Csoma's travels in the East
- 1822-1823 Growth of county opposition
- 1825, 11 September-1827, 18 August Diet in session
- 1825, 3 November Founding of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
- 1827 Ányos Jedlik creates the first electromagnetic rotating device
- 1830 Publication of *Hitel* (Credit), Count István Széchenyi's work on economic progress and bourgeois reform
- 1831, 25 July The so-called 'cholera' uprising breaks out
- 1799-1802 England joins the alliance in the war against France
- 1800 Union of England and Ireland
- 1802 Peace of Amiens between France and England
- 1805 England joins the alliance against Napoleon; Nelson's victory at Trafalgar (21 October)
- 1806-1811 Trade blockade of England
- 1810s The Luddite Movement
- 1815 Corn Law for the protection of landowners
- 1820s Appearance of Utopian Socialists
- 1820-1830 George IV
- 1825 Industrial and trade crisis
- 1829-1832 The imaginary Captain Swing and his outrages against farmers
- 1830-1837 William IV

- 1832, 16 December-1836, 2 May The diet in session; Lajos Kossuth launches his 'Parliamentary Reports'
- 1833 Publication of János Bolyai's 'Appendix' on non-Euclidean geometry
- 1835-1848 Ferdinand V King of Hungary
- 1836-1847 Mihály Pollack; construction of the Hungarian National Museum
- 1837, 5 May Kossuth arrested
- 1839, 6 June-1840, 13 May The diet in session. Amnesty for Kossuth. Act passed making Hungarian the country's official language
- 1844, 6 October Foundation of the Protectionist Society to promote domestic industry
- 1844, 22 December Foundation of the Society for the Founding of Factories
- 1846, 12 November Formation of the Conservative Party
- 1847, January Formation of the Opposition Circle
- 1847, 5 January The Opposition Manifesto demands representation for non-nobles in the municipalities, equality before the law, abolition of statute labour with redemption of services, and the abolition of entailment
- 1847 Ignác Semmelweis discovers the cause of puerperal fever
- 1847, 12 November-1848, 11 April The last diet of the Estates
- 1832, 7 June Reform Bill trebling the number of people with the right to vote
- 1834 Establishment of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union
- 1834-1836 The railway boom
- 1836 Lovell launches the Chartist Movement
- 1837-1901 Reign of Queen Victoria
- 1839, 3-4 November Chartist uprising in Newport
- 1840 Foundation of the National Chartist Union
- 1841 Tory victory at the elections
- 1846 Abolition of the Corn Laws
- 1847 Factory law establishing the ten-hour working day

- 1859, 22 August Dismissal of the ministers of the interior and the police, Bach and Kempen  
 1859, 11 September Decree on the position of Protestants issued  
 1859, 10 November Peace of Zurich  
 1859 Professor Ányos Jedlik constructs the first dynamo  
 1859-65 Construction of the Vigadó (Municipal Concert Hall) by Frigyes Feszl  
 1860, 8 April István Széchenyi commits suicide  
 1860, 11 September Agreement between Cavour and the Hungarian National Directorate  
 1860, 20 October The October Diploma issued  
 1861, 26 February The February Patent issued  
 1861, 6 April The first parliament during the neo-absolutist period opens  
 1861, 8 May László Teleki commits suicide  
 1861, 22 August The parliament is dissolved  
 1861, 27 October County assemblies banned; revival of arbitrary rule, the 'Provisorium'  
 1862, 18 May Publication of Kossuth's plan for a Danube Confederation  
 1865, 16 April Publication of Deák's 'Easter article'

1859, 16-18 October John Brown's Rebellion in America

1860, November Abraham Lincoln elected president

1861-1865 The American Civil War  
 1862, 20 May The Homestead Act

1862, 22 September Lincoln issues his Emancipation Proclamation

1863, 1-4 July The Victory of the North at Gettysburg  
 1865, 9 April The surrender of General Lee at Appomattox

1865, 15 April President Lincoln assassinated

- 1865, 8 May Schmerling is voted down in the Imperial Council; the end of the 'Provisorium'  
 1865, 10 December Opening of the parliament  
 1866, 16 June-30 August Prussian-Austrian-Italian war  
 1866, 3 July The Battle of Königgrätz (Sadowa), defeat of Austria  
 1867, 17 February-1871, 14 November Count Gyula Andrássy's government  
 1867, 22 May Kossuth's letter on the Compromise  
 1867, 29 May Parliament adopts the Compromise: (Acts XII, XIV-XVI of 1867)  
 1867, 8 June Francis Joseph King of Hungary  
 1867, 26 June Protests against the Compromise  
 1868, 9 February Founding of the General Workers' Association  
 1868, 17 March The 'Left-Centre' opposition's manifesto, the so-called 'Bihar Points'  
 1868, 2 April Formation of the 1848 Party under the leadership of József Madarász and Dániel Irányi  
 1868, 13-14 April János Asztalos arrested  
 1868, 25 June The Croatian-Hungarian Compromise (Act XXXVIII of 1868)  
 1868, 6 December Act relating to the national minorities (Act XLIV of 1868)  
 1871, 14 November-1879, 10 October Count Gyula Andrássy Foreign Minister of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy  
 1871, 14 November-1872, 30 November Menyhért Lónyay's government

1867 Disraeli carries through the reform of the suffrage

1868-1874 Gladstone Prime Minister  
 1870 Elementary Education Act

1871	The foundation of the National Gallery; the foundation of the Technical University, the Museum of Applied Art and the Academy of Art	
1872, 13 April-1 May	The first political trial of workers ('treason trial')	1871 Reform of the army; recognition of the trade unions
1873, 1 January	The unification of Pest, Buda and Óbuda under the name of Budapest	1872 Introduction of secret ballot in general elections
1875, 1 March	The formation of the Liberal Party	1874-1880 Disraeli Prime Minister
1875, 2 October-1890, 13 March	Kálmán Tisza's government	1877 Annexation of Transvaal
1875-1884	The building of the Opera House by Miklós Ybl	1878 Acquisition of Cyprus; Afghanistan an English protectorate
1876, 10 October	Leó Frankel returns home and joins the Hungarian working-class movement	1879 Uprising in Afghanistan
1878, 12 April	The formation of the United Opposition	1880-1885 Gladstone's second government; peace concluded with Afghanistan and Transvaal
1878, 21-22 April	The formation of the Non-Voters Party	
1878, July-September	The occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	
1879, 7 October	The formation of the Dual Alliance between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Germany	
1880, 16-17 May	The formation of the General Workers' Party of Hungary	
1881, 3 March	Leó Frankel convicted of incitement	

1882, 20 May	The formation of the Triple Alliance between Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Italy	1882 Agreement between Gladstone and Parnell 1882, June Occupation of Egypt
1883, August	The resurgence of the Croatian national movement (the 'coat of arms conflict')	1884 Formation of the Social Democratic Federation and the Fabian Society
1884	The formation of the Independence and 1848 Parties	1885 Occupation of Burma and Nigeria
1885	Miksa Déri, Ottó Bláthy and Károly Zipernowsky invent the transformer	
1885-1902	The construction of the parliament building by Imre Steindl	1886-1892 Marquis of Salisbury Prime Minister 1886-1887 Occupation of Kenya and Uganda
1886-1889	Customs war with Rumania	
1886	Loránd Eötvös invents the torsion balance named after him	
1890, 1 May	Workers in Hungary celebrate May Day for the first time	
1890, 7 December	The formation of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary	
1891, 1 May	Bloody clash at Orosháza between demonstrators and the authorities	
1892, 21 November-1895, 14 January	Sándor Wekerle's first government	
1892	Hungary goes on the gold standard	1892-1894 Gladstone's third government
1893	Libel trial against Aurel C. Popovici (the 'Replika' trial)	
1893-1897	The erection of the Museum of Applied Art by Ödön Lechner. Attempts to establish a Hungarian architectural style	
1894, 2 April	The funeral of Lajos Kossuth	
1894, 22 April	Rioting at Hódmezővásárhely following the arrest of János Szántó Kovács	

1894, 9-17 May	Libel trial of Rumanian politicians (the 'Memorandum' trial)	
1894, 13 May	The Third (Unification) Congress of the Social Democratic Party	
1894, 18 June	Banning of the Rumanian National Party	
1894, 10 December	The sanctioning of laws on Church-State relations (Acts XXXI-XXXIII of 1894)	
1895, 14 January-1899, 26 February	Dezső Bánffy's government	
1895, 28 January	Formation of the Catholic People's Party	1895-1902 Marquis of Salisbury Prime Minister again
1896	The Millennium festivities	
1897, 8 September	The formation of the Independent Socialist Party under the leadership of István Várkonyi, with a radical agrarian programme	
1899, 23 February-1903, 27 June	Kálmán Széll's government	1898 The Sudan placed under Anglo-Egyptian suzerainty
1900, 16 April	The formation of the Reorganized Social Democratic Party under Vilmos Mezőfi	1899-1902 The Boer War; Transvaal and the Orange Free State become part of the British Empire
1900	Launching of the radical periodical <i>Huszádik Század</i> (Twentieth Century)	
1901	Kálmán Kandó constructs the first electric railway locomotive	1901 Death of Queen Victoria
1902	The founding of the GYOSZ (National Association of Industrialists)	1901 Australia accorded the status of a dominion
1902, 31 December	The Széll-Körber agreement on the economic compromise	1901-1910 Edward VII
1903, 27 June-3 November	Count Károly Khuen-Héderváry's first government	1903, May Formation of the Labour Party

1903, 17 September	Francis Joseph's general orders from Chlopy on the unity of the army	
1903, 28 October-1905, 18 June	Count István Tisza's first government	1904, April Entente Cordiale
1904, 19-25 April	The national railwaymen's strike	
1904, 24 April	The Élesd massacre	
1904, 19 November	Formation of the coalition of the opposition parties	
1905, January	The defeat of the Liberal Party at the elections	
1905, 5 February	Demonstration in Budapest in support of the Russian revolution	
1905, 18 June-1906, 18 April	Géza Fejérváry's government	
1905, 15 September	'Red Friday'	
1905, December	The county opposition grows	
1906, 25 March	The formation of the Independent Socialist Peasant Party of Hungary under the leadership of András Achim	
1906, 8 April-1910, 17 January	Sándor Wekerle's coalition government	
1906-1909	Customs war with Serbia	
1907, 1 October	The last Austrian-Hungarian economic compromise	
1907	The Lex Apponyi (Acts XXXVI and XXVII of 1907)	1907, September New Zealand accorded the status of a dominion
1907, 10 October	Mass workers demonstration: 'Red Thursday'	
1907, 27 October	Shots fired on Slovak demonstrators at Černova	
1907, December	The Zagreb trial of Croatian and Serbian politicians for treason	
1908, 6 October	The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; war scare	

- 1908 Launching of *Nyugat* (The West), a literary periodical  
 1908-1919 Activities of the Galileo Circle
- 1909, 11 November The Independence Party splits in two  
 1910, 17 January The second Khuen-Héderváry government  
 1910, 19 February The formation of the Party of National Work
- 1911, 18 July-1912, 4 June Debate on the Army Bill in Parliament
- 1912, 22 May István Tisza Speaker of the House  
 1912, 23 May General strike and demonstrations in Budapest ('Bloody Thursday')
- 1912, 9 October-1913, 30 May The first Balkan War  
 1913, 10 June-1917, 5 June István Tisza's second government  
 1913, 14 June The formation of the United Independence and 1848 Party under Mihály Károlyi's leadership  
 1913, 29 June-10 August The second Balkan War  
 1914, spring Mihály Károlyi's tour of the United States  
 1914, 6 June The formation of the National Bourgeois Radical Party under Oszkár Jászi's leadership  
 1914, 28 June Gavriló Princip assassinates the heir apparent Francis Ferdinand in Sarajevo  
 1914, 14 July István Tisza yields to the pressure of pro-war circles  
 1914, 23 July Ultimatum to Serbia  
 1914, 28 July Declaration of war on Serbia  
 1914, 1-4 August Mutual declaration of war between the Central and Entente Powers  
 1914, 2-11 September The battle of Lemberg ends in a Russian victory
- 1908-1916 Asquith Prime Minister
- 1910, May South Africa accorded the status of a dominion  
 1910-1936 George V  
 1911, June-August General strike of transport workers  
 September Formation of the British Socialist Party
- 1914, July British troops clash with the Irish  
 4 August Britain enters the First World War  
 5-12 September In the Battle of the Marne, British and French troops arrest the advance of the Germans  
 November Britain announces the naval blockade of Germany  
 8 December Battle of the Falkland Islands

- 1915, 22 March The Russians occupy Przemyśl  
 1915, 2 May The battle of Gorlice: the Monarchy's troops break through the Russian front  
 1915, 23 May Italy declares war on the Monarchy
- 1916, 4 June The beginning of the Brusilov offensive  
 1916, July Mihály Károlyi forms a new Independence Party  
 1916, 25 August Rumania declares war on the Monarchy  
 1916, 21 November-1918, 16 November Charles IV on the throne  
 1917, March Prince Sixtus of Parma attempts to mediate peace  
 1917, 15 June-18 August Count Móric Esterházy's government  
 1917, 18 August-1918, 29 October Sándor Wekerle's third government  
 1917, 25 November Demonstration of sympathy with the Russian Revolution in the Hall of Industry  
 1918, 3 March Peace of Brest-Litovsk  
 1918, 20 June General political strike in Hungary  
 1918, 25 October Formation of the Hungarian National Council presided over by Mihály Károlyi  
 1918, 28 October The battle of the Chain Bridge  
 1918, 30-31 October The October bourgeois democratic revolution  
 1918, 31 October-1919, 8 January Count Mihály Károlyi's government  
 1918, 2 November The formation of the Budapest Workers' Council  
 1918, 3 November The armistice of Padua between the Monarchy and the Entente Powers  
 1918, 13 November The signing of the Belgrade Military Convention. Oszkár Jászi begins negotiations with Rumanian and later Slovak leaders  
 1918, 16 November The proclamation of the Republic
- 1915, 19 February British-French attack on the Dardanelles  
 May Coalition government formed in Britain  
 25 July British-French offensive on the Champagne-Artois front  
 1916, April Uprising in Dublin  
 31 May-1 June Battle of Skagerrak  
 24 July British-French offensive on the Somme  
 1917, September British and Belgian troops launch attack at Ypres
- 1918, 21 March The German attack at Arras cuts through the British-French front  
 8 August The Entente troops break through the German lines  
 11 November Capitulation of Germany  
 1918, 14 December Parliamentary elections (khaki elections)



1918, 24 November The founding of the Communist Party of Hungary

1918, 30 November The most powerful counter-revolutionary organization, the Hungarian National Defence Force Association (MOVE) is formed

1918, November-December The Károlyi government's laws regulating bourgeois democratic rights, the eight-hour working day and social reforms

1918, December The Entente grant the Czechoslovak and Rumanian armies permission to cross the demarcation line. The government's negotiations with Italian and Yugoslav politicians on co-operation

1919, 1-5 January The movement to seize the factories unfolds throughout the country

1919, 9 January A.E. Taylor's economic mission to Budapest

1919, 11 January Mihály Károlyi elected President of the Republic

1919, 15 January A.E. Coolidge's political mission to Budapest

1919, 18 January-20 March Dénes Berinkey's government

1919, 23 January The Communists are expelled from the Budapest Workers' Council and the trade unions

1919, 16 February The law on land reform is published

1919, 21 February The arrest and imprisonment of Communist leaders

1919, 23 February Mihály Károlyi begins to distribute land on his own estate

1919, 26 February The Peace Conference decides to set up a neutral zone in Hungary

1919, March The occupation of the landed estates grows into a nation-wide movement; in numerous places workers take over power

1919, January The Paris Peace Conference opens

1919, January The Irish Republic proclaimed in Dublin

25 September-5 October General strike of railwaymen, for economic reasons and to prevent intervention against Soviet Russia

1919, 20 March Lieutenant-Colonel Vyx hands over the Entente's Note on the setting up of a neutral zone; the Berinkey government resigns

1919, 21 March Proclamation of the Soviet Republic; formation of the Revolutionary Governing Council

1919, 22 March The new government's appeal and programme made public

1919, 25 March Decree on the formation of the Red Army, and the setting up of revolutionary tribunals

1919, 26 March The nationalization of industrial and mining enterprises and banks. The constitution of the Red Guard

1919, 28 March The Peace Conference decides to retain the economic blockade of Hungary

1919, 29 March Nationalization of the schools and educational institutions

1919, 2 April The Provisional Constitution is published; the franchise is extended

1919, 3 April The nationalization of medium and large estates, without land distribution

1919, 4 April General Smuts arrives in Budapest

1919, 7-10 April Council elections

1919, 13 April A counter-revolutionary committee is formed in Vienna under Count István Bethlen's leadership

1919, April-May The Rumanian and Czechoslovak interventionists' attack and successful advance

1919, 1-2 May Military and political crisis

1919, 2 May Counter-revolutionaries plunder the Hungarian Legation in Vienna

1919, 5 May At Arad, in occupied territory, Count Gyula Károlyi forms a counter-revolutionary government

1919, May-June The Hungarian Red Army's counter-offensive and victories in the North  
 1919, 1-2 June Congress of agricultural labourers in Budapest  
 1919, 7 June The Peace Conference sends a Note to the government of the Soviet Republic to halt the Red Army  
 1919, 12-13 June Congress of the united workers' parties  
 1919, 13 June Another Note from the Peace Conference  
 1919, 14-23 June Session of the National Congress of Councils  
 1919, 16 June The formation of the Slovak Soviet Republic  
 1919, 24 June Counter-revolutionary uprising in Budapest  
 1919, 30 June The Hungarian Red Army begins to withdraw from the northern territories  
 1919, 5 July Social Democratic leaders decide to begin talks in Vienna with Entente representatives  
 1919, 20 July The Hungarian Red Army launches an attack against the Rumanian troops in the East  
 1919, 24 July The Rumanian forces open a counter-offensive  
 1919, 26 July The Peace Conference declares it will not negotiate with the Governing Council  
 1919, 1 August The resignation of the Revolutionary Governing Council  
 1919, 6 August-24 November István Friedrich's government  
 1919, 9 August Miklós Horthy sets up his independent high command  
 1919, 24 August The reorganization of the Social Democratic Party  
 1919, 23 October-25 November Sir George Clerk proposes the formation of a 'concentrated' government  
 1919, 16 November Horthy enters Budapest  
 1919, 25 November-1920, 15 March Károly Huszár's government  
 1919, 29 December Execution of Ottó Korvin and Jenő László

1920, 25-26 January Parliamentary elections  
 1920, 17 February The murder of Béla Somogyi and Béla Bacsó  
 1920, 1 March The election of Miklós Horthy as Regent  
 1920, 14 March-27 July Sándor Simonyi-Semádm's government  
 1920, 19 July-1921, 13 April Pál Teleki's government  
 1920, 26 September The introduction of the *numerus clausus* and corporal punishment (Acts XXV and XXVI of 1920)  
 1921, 26-30 March The first attempted coup by Charles IV  
 1921, 14 April-1931, 18 August István Bethlen's government  
 1921, 23 October The second attempted coup by Charles IV  
 1921, 6 November The dethronement of the House of Habsburg (Act XLI of 1921)  
 1921, 22 December The agreement between the leaders of the Social Democratic Party and the Bethlen government  
 1922, May-June Parliamentary elections  
 1923, 31 January Hungary joins the League of Nations  
 1924, 1 July The stabilization of the currency  
 1924, 2 July A loan is granted by the League of Nations  
 1925, 14 April The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party is founded under the leadership of István Vági  
 1925, 18-21 August The First Congress of the Communist Party of Hungary in Vienna  
 1926, 12 July-4 August Anti-Communist trial in Budapest  
 1926, 11 November The restoration of the Upper House (act XXII of 1926)

1927, 5 April Italian-Hungarian Treaty concluded

1920, 31 July Foundation of the British Communist Party

1921, 10 May Trade agreement between Britain and Soviet Russia

1922 The Irish Free State

1924, 22 January Government formed by the Labour Party

8 August Establishment of diplomatic relations between Britain and the Soviet Union

1925 Britain goes on the gold standard

1926, 4-12 May General Strike

27 May Diplomatic relations severed with the Soviet Union

November The Balfour formula: recognition of the dominions' independence in foreign policy

- 1927, 15 May Military control is ended  
1928, early in the year The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party is smashed  
1930, February The Second Congress of the Communist Party of Hungary, held in the Soviet Union
- 1930, 1 September Demonstration by Budapest workers  
1930, 13 September The formation of the Independent Smallholders' Party under the leadership of Bálint Sziij and Zoltán Tildy  
1931, 14 June The outbreak of financial crisis  
1931, 21 August–1932, 21 September Gyula Károlyi's government
- 1932, 29 July The execution of Imre Sallai and Sándor Fürst  
1932, 1 October–1936, 12 October Gyula Gömbös's government  
1933, 18 June Gömbös visits Hitler in Germany
- 1934, February Hungarian–German economic treaty  
1934, 4 February Establishment of Hungarian–Soviet diplomatic relations  
1934, 17 March Rome Protocol on co-operation between Hungary, Italy and Austria  
1935, March Parliamentary elections  
1936, 26 June The reorganization of the executive body of the Communist Party of Hungary  
1936, 12 October–1938, 13 May Kálmán Darányi's government  
1937, 15 March The founding of the March Front  
1937, 1 July Extension of the Regent's sphere of authority  
1937, 10 October The unification of the Arrow-Cross (Nazi) parties  
1937, November Hungarian–German agreement against Czechoslovakia
- 1929 Labour victory at the elections  
1 October Re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union
- 1931–1935 'National' government  
1931, 5 December Westminster Statute: the dominions given full independence in domestic and foreign policy (British Commonwealth)
- 1933, March–June Launching of the New Deal  
1936–1951 George VI
- 1937, 18 May–1940, 10 May Chamberlain Prime Minister

- 1938, 5 March The proclamation of the Győr programme  
1938, 8 April The introduction of the first anti-Jewish law in parliament  
1938, 8 May–1939, 16 February Béla Imrédy's government  
1938, 20 August Horthy's visit to Hitler in Germany  
1938, 2 November The first Vienna Award; parts of Slovakia ceded to Hungary  
1938, 24 December–1939, 3 May The second anti-Jewish law is debated in parliament  
1939, 13 January Hungary announces her adherence to the Anti-Comintern Pact  
1939, 2 February The Soviet Union breaks off diplomatic relations with Hungary  
1939, 12 February–1941, 3 April Pál Teleki's government  
1939, 15 March The occupation of Ruthenia  
1939, 11 April Hungary withdraws from the League of Nations  
1939, 28–30 May The Arrow-Cross Party gains ground in the parliamentary elections  
1939, 23 September Restoration of Hungarian–Soviet diplomatic relations  
1940, 30 August The second Vienna Award; northern Transylvania ceded to Hungary  
1940, 8 October The formation of the Party of Hungarian Revival under Béla Imrédy's leadership  
1940, 20 November Hungary joins the Tripartite Pact  
1940, 12 December Hungarian–Yugoslav Treaty of 'Eternal Friendship'  
1941, 3 April Pál Teleki commits suicide
- 1941, 4 April–1942, 9 March László Bárdossy's government  
1941, 11 April Hungary attacks Yugoslavia
- 1938, 30 September Chamberlain signs the Munich Agreement
- 1939, 15 April General conscription brought in  
3 September Britain declares war on Germany
- 1939, 5 September Declaration of Neutrality by the USA  
1940, 10 May Churchill forms his government  
24 May–4 June The Battle of Dunkirk  
10 June Italy declares war on Britain  
7 September The first German air-raids over Britain
- 1941, 30 March German offensive against the British in North Africa  
10 May Hess's mission to Britain  
31 May British troops evacuate Crete

- 1941, 23 June Hungary severs diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union
- 1941, 27 June Hungary declares war on the Soviet Union
- 1941, 6 October National Youth Committee demonstration at the Batthyány Memorial
- 1941, 1 November Anti-German demonstration in the Kerepesi Cemetery at the graves of Kossuth and Tancsics
- 1941, 7 December Britain declares war on Hungary
- 1941, 25 December *Népszava's* Christmas issue in support of the People's Front
- 1942, 6-9 January Ribbentrop's visit to Hungary
- 1942, 19-22 January Keitel visits Hungary
- 1942, 21-25 January The bloodbath at Újvidék (Novi Sad)
- 1942, 1 February The first copy of the underground newspaper *Szabad Nép* published
- 1942, end of February The formation of the Hungarian Historical Memorial Committee
- 1942, 19 February István Horthy becomes Vice-Regent
- 1942, 9 March-1944, 19 March Miklós Kállay's government
- 1942, 15 March Demonstration organized by the Historical Memorial Committee at the Petöfi Statue
- 1943, 12 January The defeat at Voronezh
- 1943, August The formation of the Peace Party
- 1943, September The Hungarian government's secret negotiations with the Western Powers
- 8 June Britain occupies Syria
- 12 June Soviet-British agreement on co-operation
- 11 August Churchill and Roosevelt sign the Atlantic Charter
- 25 August British and Soviet occupation of Persia
- 29 September-1 October Moscow conference
- 18 November British counter-attack in Libya
- 8 December Britain and the US declare war on Japan
- 13 December Japanese troops invade Burma
- 1942, 15 February-8 March Fall of Singapore and Rangoon
- 26 May British-Soviet treaty of alliance and mutual assistance
- 27 May Rommel's attack in Libya
- 19 August British-American landing at Dieppe
- 23 October The British 8th Army's victory at El Alamein over Rommel
- 7 November British and American troops disembark at Casablanca
- 29 December British and American troops liberate North Africa
- 1943, 14-26 January At the Casablanca conference Roosevelt and Churchill decide upon the invasion of Italy
- May British and American troops occupy Tunis and Bizerte
- June-July British-American offensive in the Pacific
- 9-10 July British-American landing in Sicily
- 19-30 October Moscow conference
- 18 November-1 December Teheran conference

- 1944, 17 March Horthy visits Hitler at Klessheim
- 1944, 19 March The German occupation of Hungary
- 1944, 22 March-24 August Döme Sztójay's government
- 1944, May The formation of the Hungarian Front
- 1944, May-July The deportation of the Jews from the provinces
- 1944, 29 August-October 15 Géza Lakatos's government
- 1944, 12 September The reorganization of the Communist Party of Hungary
- 1944, 23 September Troops of the Soviet Red Army cross the Hungarian frontier
- 1944, 10 October Agreement between the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party on unity of action
- 1944, 11 October The signing of a preliminary armistice agreement in Moscow
- 1944, 14-19 October Tank battle around Debrecen
- 1944, 15 October Horthy's proclamation. The coup by the Arrow-Cross fascists
- 1944, 16 October Horthy appoints Szálasi Prime Minister
- 1944, 11 November The formation of the Liberation Committee of the Hungarian National Uprising
- 1944, 30 November The draft programme of the Communist Party in Szeged
- 1944, 3 December The mass meeting of the Hungarian National Independence Front in Szeged
- 1944, 22 December The Provisional National Assembly in Debrecen elects a political committee and a Provisional Government. Prime Minister: Béla Dálnoki Miklós
- 1944, 28 December The Provisional Government declares war on Germany
- 1945, 20 January The Allied Powers sign the armistice agreement with Hungary in Moscow

- 1944, 5-6 June D-Day: British, American and Canadian forces land in Northern France
- 13 June The Germans launch rocket attacks against Britain
- 5 October British troops land in Greece

- 1945, 4-15 February Yalta conference
- 12 April F.D. Roosevelt dies

24 April Himmler offers separate peace to Britain and the US  
 8 May German capitulation  
 5 July Labour victory at the general election  
 17 July-2 August Potsdam conference

1945, 13 February The Soviet Red Army completes the liberation of Budapest  
 1945, 15 March The Provisional National Government adopts a decree ending the system of large estates and granting land to the agricultural population  
 1945, 4 April The Red Army completes the liberation of Hungary  
 1945, 5-13 September Session of the Provisional National Assembly in Budapest endorses the measures taken by the government since December 22, 1944  
 1945, 25 September The Soviet Union and the United States establish diplomatic relations with Hungary  
 1945, 15 November A new government is formed: the Prime Minister is Zoltán Tildy  
 1945, 6 December The National Assembly unanimously adopts the motion of the Hungarian Communist Party on the nationalization of the mines  
 1946, 9 January The Supreme Economic Council is formed  
 1946, 1 February The Hungarian Republic is proclaimed. President of the Republic is Zoltán Tildy  
 1946, 4 February The government is reshuffled. The Prime Minister is Ferenc Nagy  
 1946, 5 March The Left-Wing Bloc and its executive committee brought into existence by the Hungarian Communist Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Trade Union Council and the National Peasant Party  
 1946, 7 March At the appeal of the Left-Wing Bloc 400,000 Budapest working people demonstrate against reaction in Heroes' Square  
 1946, 12 March Szálasi and several members of the Arrow-Cross government are executed

1946, 13 February Revocation of the anti-trade-union law of 1927  
 14 February Nationalization of the Bank of England

1946, 9-18 April A Hungarian government delegation in Moscow negotiates questions of economic co-operation between the two countries  
 1946, 8-25 June A Hungarian government delegation travels to Washington, London and Paris  
 1946, 1 August New stable currency comes into force, as the forint is issued  
 1946, 29 September-1 October Third Congress of the Hungarian Communist Party  
 1946, 22 November The Council of Ministers adopts a resolution according to which the three major iron works are to be nationalized effective 1 December  
 1947, 5 January The ministry of the interior discovers a plot against the Republic  
 1947, 28 May The Supreme Economic Council decides to nationalize all the larger banks  
 1947, 30 May Ferenc Nagy, from Switzerland, resigns his office as Prime Minister  
 1947, 31 May Lajos Dinnyés, Minister of Home Defence, is appointed the new Prime Minister  
 1947, 1 July The coalition parties and Parliament adopt the Three Year Plan Bill  
 1947, 1 August The Three Year Plan is launched  
 1947, 29 November The larger banks are nationalized  
 1947, 8 December A Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Aid is signed between Hungary and Yugoslavia  
 1948, 24 January A Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Aid is signed between Hungary and Rumania  
 1948, 6 February Parliament adopts a bill nationalizing the bauxite mines and aluminium production

1947, 23 June The Taft-Hartley Act

1948, 18 February A Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Aid is signed between Hungary and the Soviet Union	
1948, 25 March Industrial plants employing more than 100 workers are nationalized	
1948, 4 April The National Association of Industrialists dissolves	
1948, 12 June The 4th Congress of the Hungarian Communist Party and the 37th Congress of the Social Democratic Party declare the fusion of the two parties. The Hungarian Working People's Party (HWPP) comes into existence	
1948, 13-14 June The First Congress of the HWPP	
1948, 16 June Parliament passes a law nationalizing the schools	
1948, 18 June A Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Aid is signed between Hungary and Poland	
1948, 16 July A Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Aid is signed between Hungary and Bulgaria	
1948, 18 December Government decree regulating the organization of the co-operative farms and their management	
1949, 3-8 February Trial of József Mindszenty and his associates for activities against the People's Democracy	
1949, 16 April A Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Aid is signed between Hungary and Czechoslovakia	
1949, 15 May Parliamentary elections	
1949, 19 June Legal proceedings are begun against László Rajk and a number of Communists on trumped-up charges	
1949, 5 September The Presidential Council issues a decree introducing optional religious education	
1949, 10 December The Five Year Plan becomes law	
1949, 28 December The Presidential Council issues a decree nationalizing foreign-owned factories employing more than ten workers	
1950, 2 January The first Five Year Plan is launched	1950-1953 The Korean War

1948, 3 April The American Foreign Aid Act

1949, 4 April Britain and France sign the foundation charter of the NATO treaty  
 June-July Dock workers' strike  
 18 September Devaluation of the pound sterling

1950, 11 May Parliament passes a bill on local councils	
1950, 30 August An agreement is concluded between the Government and the Catholic Bench of Bishops	
1950, 22 October Election of local councils	
1951, 25 February Second Congress of the Hungarian Working People's Party	
1951, 17 May Parliament adopts the bill on the modified Five Year Plan	
1951, 21 July The Roman Catholic Bench of Bishops takes an oath to support the Constitution of the Hungarian People's Republic	
1953, 17 May Parliamentary elections	
1953, 27-28 June Meeting of the Central Committee of the HWPP. The meeting reveals mistakes made in the course of socialist construction, and their causes, and designates the party's new policy	
1953, 3-4 July Parliament elected on 17 May in session	
1954, 24-30 May Third Congress of the Hungarian Working People's Party	
1954, 23-24 October Constituent Congress of the Patriotic People's Front	
1954, 28 November National council elections	
1955, 14 April Meeting of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Working People's Party. The meeting expels Imre Nagy from the Political Committee and the Central Committee and relieves him of all party functions	
1955, 11-14 May The socialist countries conclude a Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Aid in Warsaw, and decide to integrate their armed forces	
1955, 14 December Hungary is admitted to the UN	

1954, October Britain joins SEATO, and participates in the formation of the Western European Union

1955, March Britain joins the Baghdad Pact  
 July 'Big Four' summit meeting in Geneva



1956, 18-21 July Meeting of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Working People's Party. Mátyás Rákosi is relieved of his post as First Secretary and his membership in the Political Committee

1956, 23 October-4 November Counter-revolution in Hungary.

Imre Nagy's government

1956, 4 November 'The Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government is formed under the leadership of János Kádár. The liquidation of the counter-revolution is begun

1956, 6 November The Provisional Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party appeals to Hungarian Communists and calls on the party's forces to unite

1958, 28 January The government is reorganized. The prime minister is Ferenc Müntich

1958, 20 June Parliament adopts the Three Year Plan for 1958-1960

1958, 16 November Parliamentary and council elections

1959, 30 November-5 December Seventh Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party

1960 A Hungarian delegation headed by János Kádár arrives in New York for the meeting of the UN General Assembly

1961, 19 January A communiqué of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party establishes that socialist conditions of production have become dominant in Hungarian farming

1961, 12 September The Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party adopts a resolution on a Second Five Year Plan to develop the Hungarian national economy

1961, 12 September Changes in the government. The Prime Minister is János Kádár

1962, 20-24 November Eighth Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party

1963, 22 November President Kennedy assassinated  
1964, 15 October Labour victory at the elections  
18 October Harold Wilson Prime Minister

1956, 31 October British, French and Israeli attack on the Suez Canal  
22 December British and French troops withdrawn from Egypt

1959, 19 February Britain, Turkey and Greece agree upon the independence of Cyprus

3 June Singapore is given limited self-government

20 November Founding of EFTA

1960, 3-7 October Labour Party declaration on the banning of nuclear weapons

## BIOGRAPHIES

ACHIM, ANDRÁS L. (1871–1911), a well-to-do peasant, began his political career in Mezőfi's reorganized Social Democratic Party. In 1905 he became a parliamentary deputy for Békéscsaba, but his mandate was revoked and he was deprived of his right to vote for three years because of his attacks on the big landowners ('anti-class incitement' in legal parlance). In March 1906 he founded the Hungarian Independent Socialist Peasant Party, which was the first to advocate a land reform, i.e. the distribution of estates larger than 1,000 *hold*. His party, which endeavoured to rally the various sections of the peasantry behind it on the basis of a democratic programme, developed successfully for a few years. But after 1909 it began to decline, and in 1911 Achim was assassinated by his personal enemies and political opponents.

ANDRÁSSY, GYULA, COUNT Sr. (1823–1890), was a member of an influential aristocratic family. Before 1845 he belonged to the liberal opposition, and was first a follower of Széchenyi and then of Kossuth. In 1848 he was Lord Lieutenant of Zemplén County. He participated in the battles of Pákozd and Schwechat, and later, as General Görgey's adjutant, in the spring campaign. In the summer of 1849 he travelled to Constantinople on a diplomatic mission. After the crushing of the War of Independence he went into exile in London and then Paris. During this time (in September 1852) the Austrians hanged him in effigy. In 1857 he was granted an amnesty and returned home, where he joined Deák's circle. He played a leading role in preparing and carrying out the Compromise with Austria. In February 1867, on Deák's recommendation, Francis Joseph appointed him the Hungarian prime minister and minister of defence. From November 1871 on he was the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister. To counteract the influence of Russia, at the Berlin Congress of 1878 he got his plan for the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted. In September 1879 he concluded the Dual Alliance with Germany, and having earlier resigned his office he gradually withdrew from public affairs.

ANDRÁSSY, GYULA, COUNT Jr. (1860–1929), was a great landowning aristocrat, the son of Count Gyula Andrássy Sr. After studying law, he entered the diplomatic service, and from 1885 served as a member of parliament of the government party. He became Under Secretary of Internal Affairs in 1892, and Minister *a latere* in 1894. He headed Count Tisza's internal opposition, the government party's aristocratic faction. In protest against Tisza's arbitrary parliamentary measures he withdrew at the end of 1904 from the government party, and in 1905 formed the Constitution Party. Between 1906 and 1910 he was Minister of Internal Affairs of the Hungarian Coalition government. After the break-up of the Coalition he

dissolved his party, but in 1913 formed a new opposition party. Between 25 October and 5 November 1918, he was the last Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary. In 1919 he was a member of the Counter-Revolutionary Committee in Vienna, but on the basis of a conservative constitutionalist standpoint he condemned the white terror. As a leader of the legitimists he participated in 1921 in the royalist coups.

APPONYI, ALBERT, COUNT (1846–1933), big landowner and politician. He was the son of a family loyal to the dynasty and was educated by the Jesuits. From 1872 he was a member of Parliament of the government party. In 1875 he joined the conservative opposition. In the 1880s he gradually moved closer to the constitutional opposition on the basis of a moderate national programme. In March 1899 he took his party into the government party. From 1901 to 1903 he served as Speaker of the House. In 1904 he and his followers withdrew from the Liberal Party and joined the Independence Party. In the Coalition government (between 1906 and 1910), and then during the World War (between June 1917 and May 1918), he was Minister of Religion and Public Education. After the war, like Gyula Andrássy, he sided with the conservative legitimist trend. At the Peace Conference in Paris and later at the League of Nations he headed the Hungarian delegation.

ÁRPÁD (d. c. 907) was second in rank in the Hungarian tribal hierarchy (*gyula*) and was military leader of the conquest of Hungary. Following Kurszán the *kende*'s death in 904 he seized power as the paramount chief and began to organize the country's political unity.

BAJCSY-ZSILINSZKY, ENDRE (1886–1944), publicist, politician and parliamentary deputy. He was one of the founders of the Hungarian National Defence Association (MOVE). In the 1920s he edited the *Szózat*, a racist journal, was one of the leaders of the Racialist Party and supported the Gömbös-Eckhardt extreme right-wing group. During the 1930s he gradually swung to the left and joined the government's opposition. In 1939 he joined the Independent Smallholders' Party. He recognized the German danger and arrived at the idea of unity of action with the Communists to avert it. He became one of the most outspoken representatives of an anti-German policy. After the country's occupation by the Germans on 19 March 1944, he was arrested. He was released on 16 October. He formed the Liberation Committee of the Hungarian National Uprising to direct the armed struggle against the Germans (11 November 1944). He was captured shortly afterward, Szálasi's summary court sentenced him to death, and on 5 December 1944 he was executed at Sopronkőhida.

BAKÓCZ, TAMÁS (1443–1521), of peasant origin, was King Matthias's secretary, Chancellor of Wladislas II, Bishop of Győr, then of Eger, and from 1497, Archbishop of Esztergom; he was titular patriarch of Constantinople and a contender for the Holy See. He was leader of the pro-Habsburg court party, a corrupt fortune hunter, but a patron of Renaissance art; his chapel in the Esztergom Cathedral is a splendid example of Hungarian Renaissance art.

BÁNFFY, DEZSŐ, BARON (1843–1911), the son of an aristocratic family of Transylvania. From 1876, as Lord Lieutenant of Szolnok-Doboka County, he earned a name for his energetic suppression of the national minorities. From 1892 he served as Speaker of the House. In January 1895, he became Prime Minister. Forceful Magyarization and the ruthless persecution of the national minorities

and the socialist movement are associated with the government he headed. The Independence Party opposition brought about its downfall through obstructionist tactics (February 1899). In November 1903, with a sharp political turn, he formed another opposition party (called the New Party). He joined the Coalition at the end of 1904, but withdrew from its executive committee in 1906. In 1910 he became chairman of the Suffrage League.

**BÁRDOSSY, LÁSZLÓ** (1890–1946), diplomat and right-wing politician. From 1924 he was head of the press department of the Foreign Ministry, and after 1932 became Counsellor of the Legation in London. Between 1934 and 1941 he served as the Ambassador in Bucharest. From 4 February 1941 he was the Teleki government's Foreign Minister, and then, after Pál Teleki's suicide, from 3 April 1941 to 7 March 1942, Prime Minister. The declaration of war on the Soviet Union is linked with his name. In 1944, at the time of the German occupation, he collaborated with the occupiers, and was one of the organizers of the Legislators' National Alliance that sought to prevent the country's withdrawal from the war. In 1945 the people's tribunal sentenced him to death as a war criminal; he was executed.

**BAROSS, GÁBOR** (1848–1892), politician. From 1875 he was a member of parliament with a liberal policy. In 1883 he became Under Secretary of Public Works and Transport. From 1886 to his death he served first as Minister of Public Works and Transport, then Minister of Commerce. The development of the communications system, the founding of the Hungarian State Railways and the regulation of the Iron Gate on the Danube are all linked with his name.

**BÁTHORY, ISTVÁN** (1533–1586), great landowning aristocrat of Transylvania, from 1571 Prince of Transylvania and from 1576 King of Poland. He married Anna Jagiello. He was educated in the humanistic spirit; as a ruler he had Counter-Reformation convictions and strove for political centralization. He was an excellent military leader and built Poland's power in the Baltic. He wished to make use of a Polish-Transylvanian union to drive the Turks out and restore the independent Hungarian monarchy, but his plans failed to materialize owing to Transylvania's impoverished state and his involvement in a Polish-Russian conflict.

**BATTHYÁNY, LAJOS, COUNT** (1806–1849), big landowner and liberal politician. In the years before 1848 he was one of the leading figures of the aristocratic opposition in the Hungarian diet, and later became the chairman of the opposition party. From 17 March 1848 he was head of the first responsible Hungarian government. Basing himself on the constitution he sought to avoid a conflict with the Austrian imperial government even at the price of concessions. Since this political course proved fruitless he resigned on 2 October 1848. At the end of December 1848 he headed the peace delegation sent by the parliament to the headquarters of General Windischgrätz. The general rejected the peace-making attempt and had Batthyány arrested in Pest on 8 January 1849. The Austrian military tribunal sentenced him to death. The sentence was carried out on 6 October 1849.

**BÉLA III** (1150–1196), the son of Géza II, was reared in Byzantium to succeed Emperor Manuel; he became King of Hungary in 1172. He married Anna of Châtillon (Anne of Antioch). In alliance with the papacy he regained the lost

provinces in the Balkans, introduced written records in the administration of his court, organized a chancellery, and maintained a court in the spirit of French chivalry. In Esztergom he had a cathedral and a royal palace built in the Late Romanesque style.

**BÉLA IV** (1206–1270), the son of Andrew II; married Maria Lascaris. From 1222 on, under the influence of the clergy, he pursued a policy in opposition to his father. First he was governor of Serbia and Dalmatia, then, from 1226, of Transylvania as well. As king from 1235 on, he endeavoured to restore the old basis of royal power, the system of counties, but, as the consequence of the resistance of the big landowners and the Mongol invasion (1241–2), he was obliged to witness the development of a secular aristocracy, which he tried in vain to counterbalance by setting up counties dominated by the common nobility and municipalities. To counteract the influence of the Pope he encouraged the mendicant orders and founded monasteries for them. Under his rule a great deal of construction was accomplished in the country (the building of churches, the stone castles of Visegrád and Sárospatak, the founding and construction of the Buda Castle), and it was in his time that the Gothic style was introduced in Hungary. His sister was St. Elizabeth of Hungary, his daughter St. Margaret of the House of Árpád, representative of the Beguine community in Hungary.

**BEM, JÓZSEF** (1794–1850), Polish army officer, freedom fighter and general of the Hungarian Honvéd army. He fought in the 1812 campaign in Russia in Napoleon's army as a Polish horse artilleryman. From 1815 to 1825 he served in the Polish army under Russian authority. He was one of the military leaders of the Polish insurrection of 1830–1. He distinguished himself as an outstanding artillery commander in the battle of Ostrołęka (1831). Afterward he lived in exile. In October 1848 he defended revolutionary Vienna, and then joined the Hungarian War of Independence. Early in November Kossuth appointed him the commander of the Hungarian troops in Transylvania. By early 1849, after a series of victorious battles, he had cleared this part of the country of Austrian troops. Then on 31 July at Segesvár, and on 9 August at Temesvár he lost battles to the forces of the vastly superior Czarist armies. He went into exile in Turkey and died there.

**BERCSÉNYI, MIKLÓS** (1665–1725), a big landowner from northern Hungary; distinguished himself in the liberation wars against the Turks, earned the title of Count, and became Lord Lieutenant of Ung County and Royal Commissary General of Upper Hungary. He was a trusted supporter of Ferenc Rákóczi II and commander of the insurrection for the country's liberation. He was the foremost representative of the aristocracy's policy and advocated self-government by the aristocracy. He went into exile with Rákóczi.

**BERINKEY, DÉNES** (1871–1948) was a lawyer. He served as Minister of Justice in the Mihály Károlyi government, and was Prime Minister from 18 January to 20 March 1919. Later he withdrew from politics.

**BERZEVICZY, GERGELY** (1763–1822), progressive-minded writer on economics, and landowner in northern Hungary. After his travels in Western Europe he worked, from 1787 on, in the office of the Lieutenancy's Council. He came into close contact with the Hungarian Jacobins. In 1795 he withdrew to his estate where he engaged exclusively in the study of economics. In his writings he attacked

the mercantilist economic policy of the Austrian Monarchy and advocated freedom of trade. He was one of the first in Hungary to recognize that the feudal economic and social order was an obstruction to progress. He warned the nobility of the intolerable conditions of the serfs.

BETHLEN, GÁBOR (1580–1629) was the son of an aristocratic family with a small fortune, and an enthusiastic supporter of Transylvanian anti-Habsburg policy. He was counsellor to the Reigning Princes István Bocskai and Gábor Báthory, and became Prince of Transylvania himself in 1613. He accomplished the country's economic reconstruction and pursued a Protestant cultural policy. Under his reign schools were established and he was a patron of the arts (he built the palace of Gyulafehérvár). Taking advantage of the Thirty Years War he made an attempt to restore the independent Hungarian monarchy using Transylvania as his base. The weakness of his allies, the opposition of the Hungarian nobility and the limited resources of the Transylvanian Principality led to the failure of his plans. Nevertheless, with his outstanding military and diplomatic abilities he played an important role in European politics as the organizer of the eastern wing of the anti-Habsburg camp. His second wife was Catherine of Brandenburg, the sister-in-law of Gustavus Adolphus.

BETHLEN, ISTVÁN, COUNT (1874–1947), Transylvanian landowner, politician, a member of the Upper House and Privy Councillor. In 1919 he was a leading figure in the counter-revolution organized to overthrow the Soviet Republic and a member of the Anti-Bolshevik Committee in Vienna. He was Prime Minister from 14 April 1921 to 24 August 1931. His term as Prime Minister is linked with the relative economic and political consolidation of the Horthy regime. Growing dissatisfaction under the impact of the economic crisis compelled him to resign in the summer of 1931, but he continued to exert an influence on political affairs. In the 1930s he was the leader of the conservative political group that opposed aspirations towards total fascism, but from 1935 he no longer maintained any party affiliations. During the Second World War he was opposed to the unconditional pro-German policy and urged a *rapprochement* with the Anglo-Saxon powers.

BOCSKAI, ISTVÁN (1557–1606), big landowner of the Tisza region. At first he headed the Transylvanian Habsburg faction and was the military leader of the victories in the 'Long War' against the Turks. He led the struggle of the Hungarian nobles against Habsburg absolutism and in 1604 organized an insurrection with the help of the Turks. He was elected Prince of Transylvania. In 1606, with the Peace of Vienna, he won self-government for the Hungarian nobility and religious freedom for Protestants. He mediated in the Peace of Zsitvatorok between the Habsburgs and the Turks. He restored the freedom of the *sekel* soldier-peasants, which had been taken away from them, and endowed the *hajdu* (heyduck) soldiers who had fought in his campaigns with collective nobility and settled them on his estates. In his political testament he designated an independent Transylvania as the defender of the Hungarian nobility's autonomy.

BOTTYÁN, JÁNOS (c. 1645–1709) was a soldier of the border fortresses. He participated in the liberation war against the Turks and became a colonel in the Austrian imperial army. He joined Rákóczi's fight for freedom against the Habsburgs, during which he became one of the most outstanding and best-loved leaders among the

troops. Among his military exploits his victorious Transdanubian campaign of 1705 and his defence of Transdanubia in the following year were the most memorable.

BÖHM, VILMOS (1880–1949) was already a leader of the Socialist Democratic Party in the period preceding the First World War. In the Károlyi government he was Under Secretary of Defence, and Minister of Defence in the Berinkey government. During the Hungarian Soviet Republic he was Commissar of Defence, the Commander-in-Chief of the Hungarian Red Army and Minister to Vienna. He was a well-known member of the Social Democratic central leadership and an advocate of agreement with the Entente Powers. After the fall of the Soviet Republic he lived in exile in Vienna, and later in Sweden. He maintained contact with Mihály Károlyi. He came back to Hungary in 1945 and the following year served as Hungarian Minister to Stockholm, but afterwards did not return to his homeland.

CHARLES I (Charles Robert, of the Naples branch of the House of Anjou, 1288–1342), Caroberto, by his original Christian name, was the son of Charles Martel, Prince of Naples, and Mary, a Hungarian royal princess. While Andrew III was still alive he was already claiming the throne with papal support, but only after a decade of struggle with his rivals, in 1308, was he chosen king. He struggled for a further fifteen years to consolidate his rule over the country, which had been split up into independent provinces by the oligarchy. Instead of recapturing the royal lands and counties granted to the nobility by his predecessors, he established a new material basis for royal power by his economic policy of support for mining, commerce and the development of towns and by the setting up of a system of taxation, tolls and a monopoly on precious metals. He was the first in Hungary to mint gold coins. In his foreign policy he sought to achieve peaceful co-operation with the neighbouring states in the North (his wife was Elizabeth Lokietek, a Polish princess), and, at the same time, he prepared for Hungary's expansion towards the Adriatic by an agreement for the succession to the throne with his Neapolitan relatives.

DEÁK, FERENC (1803–1876), a well-to-do landowner. He studied law and served in the county administrative apparatus. From 1833 he was a deputy and the leader of the liberal opposition. In the 1840s he sided with Kossuth. In 1848 he was the Minister of Justice of the Batthyány government. He represented a moderate standpoint, and at the time of the outbreak of the War of Independence he retired to his estate. In 1854 he made his home in Pest. He rejected the appointments offered him by the Vienna court. In 1860–1 in the parliament he was the leader of the moderate liberal trend (the Address Party), and an advocate of compromise with the Habsburg dynasty. In 1865, with his famous Easter article, he promoted the starting of negotiations for a compromise, in which he played a leading role. He was called the 'Sage of the Country' for bringing about the Compromise. In 1867 he did not accept any kind of office, but as the politician enjoying the greatest prestige in the country he directed for a long time the government party. He played a considerable role in the legislation of liberal laws.

DOBI, ISTVÁN (1898–1968), agricultural worker. In his childhood and early youth he worked as a day-labourer on various large estates. At the time of the Soviet Republic he was a soldier of the Hungarian Red Army. From 1935 he was a member

of the Independent Smallholders' Party, and was elected a member of its executive body. During the Second World War he played a role in organizing the Peasant Federation, and from 1943 was the chairman of the agricultural labourers' section which represented the agrarian proletariat. After the country's liberation from fascism he became a member of the Political Committee of the Smallholders' Party. He became one of the leaders of the party's left wing, and from 1947 on was the party's chairman. He was also a member of parliament and from 1945 a Minister of State. In 1948 he was appointed Minister of Agriculture. Between 1949 and 1952 he served as Prime Minister. From 1952 till his retirement in 1967 he was President of the Presidential Council.

DOBÓ, ISTVÁN (c. 1500-1572), a great landowning aristocrat of northern Hungary, in command of various border fortresses. Between 1549 and 1552 he commanded the fortress of Eger whose heroic defence against the Turks he directed in 1552. After that, until 1556, he was voivode of Transylvania, temporarily under Habsburg rule. He was a leader of the Hungarian aristocrats who were dissatisfied with the ineffectiveness of the Habsburg military leadership, and in 1569 was imprisoned under suspicion of conspiracy. He was released from prison only shortly before his death.

DÓZSA (SZÉKELY), GYÖRGY (d. 1514), a soldier of the border fortresses in southern Hungary, who won a title of nobility with his military exploits as an officer of the Nándorfehérvár (Belgrade) garrison. In 1514 Archbishop Tamás Bakócz appointed him commander of the crusading army against the Turks. The grievances of the peasants who joined his army and the obstacles placed in the way of preparing for the battles against the Turks by the ruling class induced him to turn his army against the landlords and to lead the peasant war that was flaring up throughout the country. After his victorious advance in the Great Plain region his army was defeated by the united forces of the nobility at Temesvár. He was captured and savagely tortured to death by being seated on a red-hot throne of iron.

EÖTVÖS, JÓZSEF, BARON (1813-1871), writer and politician. In contrast to his family which was loyal to the dynasty, from his youth he professed liberal opposition views. From 1834 he was deputy clerk in Fejér County, and from 1835 he was clerk of the Chancellor's Office. After extensive travels in the West he became a member of the opposition, and a leader of the centrist group fighting for a bourgeois transformation of the country. He engaged in considerable literary and scientific activities. In 1848 he was Minister of Religion and Public Education, and when the War of Independence broke out he retired and went to Germany. From 1861 he sided with Deák, and in 1867 he was again Minister of Religion and Public Education. He played a considerable role in the legislation of liberal laws. The law on general and compulsory public education and the one giving Jews equal rights are linked with his name.

ESTERHÁZY, MIKLÓS, COUNT (1582-1645), a Protestant nobleman with small property who, by adopting the Catholic faith and showing unshakeable loyalty to the Habsburgs as well as by concluding a fortunate marriage, acquired vast property and the title of count. He thus founded one of the most influential aristocratic families in Hungary. From 1625 to his death, he worked as palatine for a compromise between the self-government of the Hungarian nobility and

Habsburg absolutism, and carried on a persistent struggle against the anti-Habsburg faction and the Principality of Transylvania that supported it.

ESTERHÁZY, PÁL, PRINCE (1635-1713), the son of Palatine Miklós, was the leader of the Hungarian aristocracy which remained loyal to the dynasty and turned against the *kuruc* liberation movements. He was palatine from 1681. He was awarded the title of prince in 1687 for promoting the diet's election of the Habsburgs as Hungary's hereditary rulers. His castle at Kismarton and the court he maintained (he also founded an orchestra that was to become famous) was an important centre of the Hungarian baroque style and culture.

ESZE, TAMÁS (1666-1708), a serf in the service of Rákóczi engaged in trade, was one of the organizers of the *kuruc* insurrection in the Hegyalja district (north-eastern Hungary) in 1697. In 1703 he offered Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II, who was in exile in Poland, the support of the peasantry who were dissatisfied with the lawlessness of the Habsburg soldiery. With this he became the initiator of the fight for freedom. He rose to the rank of brigadier in the *kuruc* army and played a leading role in the battles of the Tisza region and in representing the aspirations of the peasantry for freedom. He was granted a title of nobility by Rákóczi and his native village won noble privileges.

FARKAS, KÁROLY (1843-1907), iron worker, the Hungarian representative in the First International. He was one of the organizers of the General Workers' Party of Hungary. In 1870 he founded the Hungarian General Workers' Sick Relief and Disability Fund. In the early 1890s he belonged to the left wing of the Social Democratic Party.

FRANKEL, LEÓ (1844-1896), a militant member of the Hungarian and international labour movement. As a goldsmith he became acquainted with the ideas of Marxism in Germany, and also came into personal contact with Marx. In Paris he took part in the direction of the First International. During the Paris Commune he was Commissioner of Labour. After the defeat of the Commune he went to London where he was elected a member of the General Council of the International. In 1876—after imprisonment for a short time—he engaged in work in the labour movement in Hungary and was the first to advocate the teachings of Marxism here. In 1880 he formed the General Workers' Party with the old leaders of the socialist movement. In 1881 he was sentenced to two years in prison for incitement. After his release from prison he went to Austria, then Paris, and as an associate of Engels he participated in the work of organizing the Second International.

GARAI, MIKLÓS, Jr. (c. 1370-1433), the son of Palatine Miklós Garai Sr. He was the leader of the most powerful league of barons. From 1387 was *bán* of Macsó, and from 1394 *bán* of Croatia-Slavonia-Dalmatia. In 1401 he and his followers formed a league with King Sigismund and he was appointed palatine in 1402. From that time until his death he virtually controlled Hungarian internal politics. Sigismund's efforts towards centralized power with the support of the nobility and the towns were unsuccessful owing to his influence.

GÉZA (d. 997), paramount chief, ruled from 970. He continued to organize the feudal state begun by his forebears by a *rapprochement* with the neighbouring states, primarily Germany and Venice, and by building contacts with foreign dynasties, and settling Christian clerics and knights in the country. He himself adopted the Christian faith, but also tolerated paganism. He crushed the independence of the tribal chieftains, stationed his own garrisons in their castles and with this established the basis of the system of counties in the country. At the time of his death the areas west of the Tisza river were united under his authority.

GÖMBÖS, GYULA (1886–1936), fascist and racist politician. During the First World War he was a captain on the General Staff. From January 1919 he was Chairman of the Hungarian National Defence Forces Association (MOVE). In the counter-revolutionary government of Szeged he was Horthy's Under Secretary of State and was one of the leading figures of the white terror. In the 1920s—since he found Bethlen's programme too liberal—he established the Racist Party. He was a member of several clandestine right-wing organizations. In 1927 he again joined the government party. From 1929 was Minister of Defence, then Prime Minister between 1 October 1932 and 6 October 1936. He made an attempt to build a totalitarian system of fascism on the models of Italy and Germany. In foreign policy he favoured alignment with Germany: in 1933 he was the first among foreign statesmen to pay a visit to Hitler.

GÖRGEY, ARTHUR (1818–1916), general of the Hungarian army, who during the 1848–9 War of Independence was several times Commander-in-Chief of the Honvéd army. He came from an impoverished family of the lesser nobility and had become an officer of the Austrian imperial army. Resigning his commission he withdrew from military service and studied chemistry. In the summer of 1848 he joined the National Guard and was soon promoted from captain to major. In September 1848 he had Count Eugene Zichy arrested and hanged for committing counter-revolutionary acts in collaboration with Jelačić. Early in November the revolutionary government appointed him General, and commander first of the Upper Danube, later the Tisza army, and finally of the whole Honvéd army. A military commander of outstanding abilities, he achieved a number of very significant victories. But when difficulties in the national independence struggle began to multiply, he relied upon the Peace Party, and so found himself more and more sharply in conflict with the political leadership of the revolution and the War of Independence. In the summer of 1849 he decided to lay down his arms. After the capitulation at Világos—although the leaders of the War of Independence and the generals of the Honvéd army were ruthlessly executed—Görgey was treated with clemency. He was interned at Klagenfurt until 1867, and then lived in Hungary in complete seclusion.

GRASSALKOVICH, ANTAL (1694–1771), royal official of noble birth. In his capacity of royal legal administrative official, benefiting from the confused property relations of the areas liberated from Turkish rule in the seventeenth century, he acquired a large fortune in land. In 1731 he became Chief Justice (representing the king in the highest court), in 1748 chairman of the Hungarian Treasury and was granted the title of count. He was an intimate confidant of Maria Theresa and the main support of her policy towards Hungary. His castle in Gödöllő is one of the most outstanding monuments of Hungarian baroque culture.

HADIK, ANDRÁS (1710–1790), a military officer of noble birth. In the Austrian Wars of Succession and the Seven Years War he distinguished himself with his spectacular Hussar exploits (among the latter, the holding of Berlin to ransom), and through his ability as a military leader he rose to the rank of marshal. From 1764 to 1768 he was governor of Transylvania, and then from 1773 with the title of count he was head of the Vienna military council—the first and last Hungarian to hold this post.

HAMBURGER, JENŐ (1882–1936), a country doctor and head of a local village organization of the Social Democratic Party during the First World War. In 1918 he organized strikes and movements to occupy land. He was an outstanding member of the left-wing Social Democrats, and later a Communist. He was Commissioner of Agriculture at the time of the Soviet Republic. He went into exile in Austria and then in the Soviet Union where he became a victim of the Stalinist purges.

HORTHY, MIKLÓS (1868–1957), naval officer, aide-de-camp to Francis Joseph, the last naval commander of the Monarchy with the rank of rear admiral. He was the Minister of Defence of the government that was formed in Szeged to overthrow the Soviet Republic. He entered the capital at the head of his counter-revolutionary army on 16 November 1919. He was the chief architect of the reign of white terror, and the leading figure of the counter-revolution. He acted as Hungary's Regent from 1 March 1920 to 16 October 1944. After his election as Regent he prevented the return of Charles IV. After his attempt on 15 October 1944 to withdraw from the war he resigned under German pressure and vested Ferenc Szálasi, the Arrow-Cross Party leader, with power, and placed himself under German protection. After the war he lived in Portugal.

HUNYADI, JÁNOS (1407–1456) was the son of a Wallachian Rumanian boyar family that had migrated to Transylvania. As a youth he grew up in the court of King Sigismund, whom he followed to Italy. There for a time he fought as a mercenary leader. From 1439 he was *bán* of Szörény, from 1441 Voivode of Transylvania and *ispán* of Temes. He organized defences against the Turks and in 1442 he led campaigns against them in the Balkans, but these offensives ended in failure owing to the Turks' superior forces and Hungarian internecine strife. The gifts of lands awarded him for his military services made him the most powerful landlord in the country. The lesser nobility who demanded political rights supported him against the barons. In 1446, the diet elected him governor for the duration of the king's infancy. From 1452 he continued to control military affairs with the title of captain-general. After his victory at Nándorfehérvár (Belgrade) he died of the plague in his camp. His castle at Vajdahunyad is a representative work of Hungarian Gothic art.

IANCU, AVRAM (1824–1872), lawyer, leader of the Rumanian national revolutionary movement. The son of a well-to-do peasant family, he studied law, and in 1848 was one of the organizers of the Rumanian National Assemblies at Balázsfalva (30 April, 15 May, 15 September). He was a member of the Rumanian National Committee and a commander of the most powerful Rumanian insurgent unit, which supported the imperial army and waged mainly guerrilla warfare. After his defeat early in December 1848, he withdrew to the mountains. In an effort to reach an agreement he conducted peace negotiations with the Hungarian



revolutionary representatives, but they led to no results. In 1850 he twice visited Vienna in defence of the rights of the Rumanians. He refused to accept any decorations from the victorious imperial government, and for this reason he was regarded as unreliable; for a time he was even under arrest. He died with a deranged mind.

IMRÉDY, BÉLA (1891–1946), financial expert. From 1928 he was the director of the National Bank, and from 1935 he was its president. Between 1932 and 1935 he was the Gömbös government's Minister of Finance, and between 14 May 1938 and 16 February 1939 he was the Prime Minister. In his internal policy he strove to build a fascist regime based on authoritarianism; after Munich he shifted his foreign policy to complete support of the Germans. The politicians who opposed him compelled him to resign by referring to one of his Jewish ancestors. After his downfall he continued to maintain contacts with the Germans, and was an influential figure in the government party's extreme right wing. In the autumn of 1940 he resigned from the government party and formed the Hungarian Revival Party, calling for full collaboration with the Germans and the institution of total fascism. During the German occupation he acted as chief minister of economic affairs. After the country's liberation he was tried and sentenced to death as a war criminal by the people's tribunal and was executed.

IRÁNYI, DÁNIEL (1822–1892), politician. He practised law in Pest, and joined Kossuth's circle. In 1848–9 he was Government Commissioner of Sáros County, and later of Buda and Pest. After the capitulation at Világos he was sentenced to death *in contumaciam*. As an emigré he carried on considerable literary activity in support of Hungary's independence. In 1867 he returned home to Hungary and the extreme left wing and later the Independence Party were formed under his leadership. He was chairman of the latter until his death.

JÁSZI, OSZKÁR (1875–1957), sociologist, publicist, politician, a leading figure and theoretician of bourgeois radicalism in Hungary. After his university studies he was given an appointment in the Ministry of Agriculture. He was one of the founders of the Society for Social Sciences and he launched the periodical *Huszadik Század* (Twentieth Century). He was an advocate of democratic reforms to eliminate the vestiges of feudalism, and of peace with the national minorities. He co-operated with the Social Democratic Party and with the left wing of the Independence Party. Among his theoretical works his studies on the question of the national minorities were the most prominent. In June 1914 he founded the Bourgeois Radical Party based on the intelligentsia. His party demanded a land reform, political democracy and a liberal policy towards the national minorities. He went abroad in May 1919, and settled in the United States. As a professor at Oberlin College he carried on considerable scholarly studies.

JELAČIĆ, JOSIP, BARON (1801–1859), imperial military officer and politician of Croatian descent. He served the empire first in Galicia and Carniola, and then in Italy and Dalmatia. He was already in contact with leaders of the Croatian national movement before 1848. From March 1848 he was *bán* of Croatia. He led the first attack against the Hungarian revolution. Despite his defeat (29 September 1848) the emperor appointed him Royal Commissioner of Hungary with full powers. He took part in the suppression of the revolution in Vienna, and—under the command of Windischgrätz—in the military operations in Hungary. In 1855 he was granted the title of count.

JUSTH, GYULA (1850–1917), landowner and politician. He studied law. From 1884 till his death he was a member of parliament and a leader of the Independence Party (from 1893 to 1895 its chairman). From 1905 to 1909 he was the Speaker of the House. At the time of the Coalition government he gradually turned against the leaders of his party, and put forward a demand for an independent Hungarian bank. In the autumn of 1909 he became the leader of the majority faction of the party. From 1911, on the basis of a programme for a general franchise he formed an alliance with the Social Democrats and the bourgeois radicals. For the purpose of unity of action against István Tisza, he brought about in 1913 the unity of the Independence Party with Ferenc Kossuth and Mihály Károlyi, and then retired from politics owing to ill health.

KÁDÁR, JÁNOS (b. 1912), precision mechanic, active in the labour movement from the age of 17; from 1931 a member of the Hungarian Communist Party and also of the Young Communist League, in 1932 became a member of the secretariat of the latter. He was arrested in 1935 and sentenced to prison for two years. After his release he was active within the Social Democratic Party. In 1940 and 1941 he participated in the reorganization of the underground Communist Party. From 1941 he was a member of the Budapest Regional Committee of the party, from May 1942 a member of its Central Committee, and from the beginning of 1942 the secretary of the latter. After Hungary's occupation by the Germans he endeavoured to make contact with the leaders of the Yugoslav Liberation Army, but was captured at the frontier. He escaped in the autumn of 1944. After the country's liberation he was elected a member of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Communist Party and of its Political Committee. He participated in the Provisional National Assembly. From the end of 1945 to August 1948 he was Secretary of the Party Committee of Greater Budapest. From 1946 he was Deputy General Secretary of the party. From August 1948 to June 1950 he was Minister of the Interior. In the spring of 1951 he was arrested on the basis of fabricated charges. He was rehabilitated in 1954. He was elected a member of the Central Committee and the Political Committee of the Hungarian Working People's Party in July 1956, and appointed a Secretary of the Central Committee. During the struggle to suppress the counter-revolution of 1956, the reorganization of the party, by which the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and the Hungarian Workers' and Peasants' Government were formed, took place under his leadership. In January 1958—at his request—he was relieved of his office as Prime Minister, but between 1961 and 1965 he again served as Prime Minister. Since 1956 he has been the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

KÁLLAY, MIKLÓS (1887–1967), big landowner and right-wing politician. He was Lord Lieutenant of Szabolcs County and Minister of Agriculture of the Gömbös government from 1932 to 1935. After Bárdossy's downfall he became Prime Minister (9 March 1942 to 21 March 1944). In his foreign policy—especially under the impact of the defeat of the Germans at Stalingrad—he made an attempt to loosen the close ties with Germany, and while continuing the war against the Soviet Union, he sought ways of reaching an agreement with the Anglo-Saxon Powers and a separate peace. After the country's occupation by German troops he sought refuge at the Turkish Legation in order to escape arrest by the Germans. He was compelled to leave the Legation in November 1944, and the Germans imprisoned him in the Mauthausen concentration camp. After the war he settled in the United States where he died in 1967.

KOLOMAN (BEAUCLERC) (c. 1065–1116), the older son of Géza I, was educated for the priesthood because of his humped back, but in accordance with the testament of Ladislas I he ascended the throne in 1095. His younger brother, Álmos, refused to resign himself to this turn of events, and when he sought to assert his claim as pretender, Koloman had his eyes put out. Yet in contrast to this act of barbarism stand the laws abolishing mutilation as punishment and the famous law against witch hunts (*de strigis quae non sunt nulla mentio fiat*), which for a long time was regarded as a sign of enlightenment far in advance of his times, although it was passed merely to counteract a popular superstition. In his foreign policy he aligned himself with the papacy, and he introduced clerical celibacy; the Pope reciprocated by recognizing him as King of Croatia and of Dalmatia, which he took away from Venice.

KÁROLYI, GYULA, COUNT (1871–1947), big landowner and counter-revolutionary politician. At the time of the Soviet Republic he was the Prime Minister of the National Government that was formed in Arad and later moved to Szeged. After Bethlen's downfall he again became head of the government (24 August 1931–1 October 1932). His attempt to put an end to the economic crisis by the reduction of the salaries of civil servants, cuts in social expenditure, and tax increases was a failure. He was compelled to resign because of the economic crisis and to relinquish power to Gyula Gömbös, who was more open in his demands for the application of fascist models.

KÁROLYI, MIHÁLY, COUNT (1875–1955), a leader of international stature in the struggle for a democratic Hungary. From 1901 he was a liberal politician, from 1906 an independent, and from 1913 chairman of the Independence Party and a fighter for democratic reforms. During the First World War he was opposed to the German alliance. In 1918 he became Chairman of the National Council, the Prime Minister, and from January 1919 President of the Republic. He went into exile in July 1919. The Horthy regime denounced him as a traitor, and confiscated his lands. He pursued an anti-fascist policy and co-operated with the Communist Party; from 1943 he headed the Movement for a Democratic Hungary in Britain. He returned home in 1946. From 1947 to 1949 he was Hungarian Minister to Paris. Under the impact of the Rajk trial and other violations of the law he went into exile. After his death his ashes were brought back to Hungary.

KÁROLYI, SÁNDOR, BARON (1668–1743), great landowner of eastern Hungary, Lord Lieutenant of Szatmár County. At first he fought against the *kuruc* insurgents, but before long he joined the Rákóczi war of independence, of which he became one of the leading generals. Without Rákóczi's consent he concluded the peace of Szatmár and, as a reward, was given large landed estates and granted the title of count (1712). He was a general in the imperial army, and became a member of the Hungarian Lieutenancy Council. He played a prominent role at the diets of the period in laying the foundation for institutionalizing the compromise between Habsburg absolutism and the Hungarian nobility and in developing Hungarian mercantilist theories. He urged the establishment of manufactories, and set an example himself by setting up the first textile manufactory in Hungary in 1722.

KINIZSI, PÁL (died in 1494), military leader of peasant descent. After 1467 he scored numerous victories against the Turkish armies who were attacking Hungary, the most notable being at Kenyérmező in 1479. King Matthias appointed him *ispán*

of Temes and Bihar counties. Later he supported Wladislaw II against Habsburg claims to the throne. In 1494 he won the rank of Lord Chief Justice.

KOSSUTH, FERENC (1841–1914), politician, the son of Lajos Kossuth. He grew up in exile. He first worked as an engineer, and was general manager of several industrial enterprises in Italy. After his father's death he returned home. From 1895 he was a member of parliament, and the chairman of the Independence Party. He was a weak-willed politician, prone to compromises. He owed his position to the magic of the Kossuth name and the general esteem his father had enjoyed. From 1904 he was the chairman of the steering committee of the Coalition, and from April 1906 he was the Minister of Finance of the Wckerle government. In 1909 he headed the minority faction when his party split. After the formation of the United Independence and 1848 Party (June 1913) he retired from politics.

KOSSUTH, LAJOS (1802–1894) was Minister of Finance in 1848–9 and later Governing President. He was the figure of greatest historical importance in the nineteenth-century struggle for the country's bourgeois transformation and for national independence. He was the son of a landless gentry family and became a lawyer. He was a county official from 1824 to 1832, and a representative in the 1832–6 diet in place of an absent member. He launched the journals *Dietal Reports* and *Municipal Reports* (1832–6 and 1836–7). Because of the contents of this paper, he was sentenced in 1839 to four years imprisonment for incitement. After he was granted an amnesty he started a new paper: the *Pesti Hirlap* (1841–4). In this journal he put forward his programme for a bourgeois transformation of society. As a result of his theoretical and practical work at the last assembly of the nobility in 1847, he emerged as the leader of the opposition. He played a decisive role in the diet which, in March 1848, voted to adopt the laws ensuring the bourgeois transformation. He became the Minister of Finance in the Batthyány government, and then the Chairman of the National Defence Commission formed on 15 September 1848. He was a tireless organizer of the independence struggle. From 14 April 1849 he was Provisional Head of State, the Governing President. On 11 August 1849 Görgey took over supreme authority from him. After the defeat of the War of Independence he went into exile. He lived in Turkey until 1851, travelled to England and America in 1851–2, and then settled down in London. He went to live in Italy in 1861. From 1865, except for an interruption of a few years, he lived in Turin, until his death. Even in exile Kossuth fought with all his might for an independent Hungary. He drew the lessons of the 1848–9 independence struggle once and for all, and in a plan for a Danube Confederation he drafted a programme for an alliance between the Hungarian and the neighbouring peoples.

KÖLCSEY, FERENC (1790–1838), poet and politician, author of the text of the Hungarian National Anthem. He was the son of a family of the lesser nobility. After finishing his law studies he lived from 1812 on his estate in the countryside. He endeavoured to promote the country's advance from feudalism by his contributions to literature. In 1829 he was deputy clerk of Szatmár County, and then became a delegate to the diet, one of the finest speakers of the Reform Party, a spokesman for the emancipation of the serfs. From 1830 he became a full member of the Academy of Sciences.

KRISTÓFFY, JÓZSEF (1857–1928), politician. He studied for the bar. From 1896 he was a deputy of the Liberal Party, and from 1904 the Lord Lieutenant of

Szatmár County. In 1905 and 1906 he served as the Minister of the Interior of the Fejérváry government. In September 1905 he advocated the introduction of a general franchise. On this basis he came to an agreement with the leaders of the Social Democratic Party. After his downfall he belonged to the circle of followers of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand. From 1911 he was a member of parliament again, but resigned his seat in 1913.

KUN, BÉLA (1886–1939), an outstanding figure in the Hungarian and international Communist movement. He became active in the labour movement in 1902. In 1916 he became a prisoner of war in Russia. From 1917 he fought on the side of the Bolsheviks. He was Lenin's associate, an organizer of the Hungarian Communist prisoners of war and chairman of the International Federation of Communist Prisoners of War. Returning to Budapest in November 1918, he was the founder of the Communist Party of Hungary, and became the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Republic, and actual leader of the government. In August he went into exile in Vienna where he was interned and then expelled from the country. From then on he lived in the Soviet Union. In 1921 he became a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. He took part in organizing the domestic and international Communist movements. He became a victim of the Stalinist purges.

(St.) LADISLAS I (c. 1040–1095), the son of Béla I, and king from 1077. He sought the acquisition of Croatia and Dalmatia on dynastic grounds, and because of this—despite his religious convictions—he clashed with the papacy. He founded bishoprics and monasteries, built churches, and maintained lively contacts with Church centres in Western Europe. His heroic battles against the incursions of the Cumans became a source of many legends, and he served as an ideal of Hungarian chivalry.

LANDLER, JENŐ (1875–1928), lawyer, legal adviser of the railway workers, a Social Democrat from the beginning of the century, and later a Communist. At the time of the Soviet Republic he was People's Commissar for Trade, and later for Internal Affairs. He was put in command of the Third Army Corps, and in July 1919 in full command of the Hungarian Red Army. He went into exile in Vienna. Until his death he participated in the Hungarian and international Communist movements. He died in Cannes, and his ashes were buried by the wall of the Kremlin.

LORÁNTFFY, ZSUZSANNA (c. 1600–1660), from 1616 the wife of György Rákóczi I, who was later to become Prince of Transylvania. She was a cultured woman with lively intellectual interests, an enthusiastic supporter of the social and pedagogical programmes of the Puritan movement in the face of the opposition of the majority of the ruling class. She was a patron of the activities of Comenius at Sárospatak. She enlarged her castle at Sárospatak with a wing in late Renaissance style.

LOUIS I (the Great) (1326–1382), the son of Charles I and Elizabeth Lokietek. His wife was Elizabeth Kotromanić, a Bosnian royal princess. He ruled from 1342. He was a chivalrous king of great energy, imagination and fascinating personality who, with his Italian campaigns (1347–52) in pursuit of the throne of his Neapolitan ancestors, pursued the chimera of an Adriatic realm. Sobering from

these illusions, he fought successful battles against Venice (1354 and 1381) for the possession of Dalmatia. But his further efforts towards Balkan expansion were frustrated. Near the end of his life he worked for the inclusion of Hungary in a system of Central European states. In 1370 he inherited the Polish crown, and later he betrothed his daughter Mary, the heiress to his throne, to Sigismund of Luxemburg. In his internal policy he relied on the great landed aristocracy. His courts at Visegrád and Diósgyőr were important centres of Gothic and pre-Renaissance art.

LUCAS (d. 1181). Church dignitary of aristocratic birth. He studied in Paris, and became Bishop of Eger in 1156, and Archbishop of Esztergom in 1158. He was a fighter for the idea of the political supremacy of the Church and the world rule of the pope. Under his influence Géza II joined the papal faction against Frederick Barbarossa. He led the struggle against Byzantine influence and the intervention of Emperor Manuel. Under Béla III he was forced to give up his political leadership.

MADARÁSZ, LÁSZLÓ (1811–1909), politician. In 1836 he worked for the Municipal Reports, the journal edited by Kossuth. He was a radical deputy to the diet of the nobility in 1847–8. Together with his brother, József Madarász, he belonged to the left wing of the opposition. He was one of the most radical leaders of the 1848–9 revolution and War of Independence and the organizer of the radical group of the first parliament of people's deputies. A member of the National Defence Commission, he was Minister of Post and Police. He was a passionate opponent of compromise. He went into exile after the defeat of the War of Independence. He was sentenced to death *in contumaciam*. He settled down in the United States and became a farmer.

MARTINOVICS, IGNÁC (1755–1795), abbot, philosopher, the organizer of the Hungarian Jacobin movement. From 1773 he was a Franciscan monk in Buda. In 1781 and 1782 he travelled throughout Western Europe and in Paris he came into contact with the left wing of the Freemasons. From 1783 he was a teacher of natural science at the University of Lemberg. In his dissertations on natural science and philosophy he arrived at materialism and consistent atheism. In the political sphere, however, he still continued to perform services for the Vienna court, in 1791. From 1792 he gradually came under the influence of Jacobin ideas. In the spring of 1794 he organized the radical supporters of Jacobin ideas and gentry reformers into a secret society. The aims of the organization were to bring about a bourgeois transformation of society by revolutionary means and establish a republic. On 23 July 1794 the police arrested him, and the court sentenced him to death for high treason. He was executed in 1795.

MARTINUZZI, GYÖRGY (Brother George, 1482–1551), his original surname was Utiesenich. He was a soldier of Dalmatian Croat origin and became a Pauline monk. From 1528 he became King János Zápolyai's confidential advisor, Bishop of Várad, later cardinal, guardian of John Sigismund, and, after 1541, Governor of the Eastern Hungarian Kingdom. After the taking of Buda by the Turks he broke with his pro-Turkish policy and bent his efforts towards uniting the country under Habsburg rule. Finding the Habsburg military force sent to Transylvania at his request insufficient, he bargained with the Turks in order to gain time. General Castaldo of the imperial forces grew suspicious and had him assassinated.

He was the builder of the Eastern Hungarian Kingdom's state organization, and a patron of Renaissance art.

**MATTHIAS, HUNYADI**, (known by his humanist name as *Corvinus*, 1440–1490). The son of János Hunyadi and Elizabeth Szilágyi, he was reared by János Vitéz. His first wife was Catherine Podiebrad, and his second (from 1476) Beatrice of Aragon (Naples). Ladislas V, after executing his older brother, had him taken to Prague as a hostage. When he was released, he was elected king in 1458 by the pressure of the nobles. Heeding the advice of János Vitéz and relying on the support of the nobility in opposition to the oligarchy of the barons, he pursued a policy of centralization. He organized a staff of professional court officials, and maintained an army of mercenaries. Circumventing the diet he attempted to introduce an absolutist regime, but he was compelled to compromise with the nobles who feared for their privileges. With his Czech and Austrian campaigns (1468–85) he worked to build a Central European empire. He hoped to make Vienna, which he captured in 1485, its centre. He maintained a brilliant court at Buda, which he made the foremost centre of Renaissance and humanist culture north of the Alps with his large-scale building, his famous library (*Corvina*), and international circle of humanists. In Pozsony he founded a university (*Academia Istropolitana*), and at Visegrád he had a monumental summer palace built.

**MEZŐFI, VILMOS** (1870–1947), journalist. In the 1890s he was an active propagandist for the Social Democratic Party until his expulsion. In 1900 he founded the Reorganized Social Democratic Party. His party took a nationalist direction and achieved success mainly in organizing the poor peasantry. In 1905 he was a parliament deputy and was in close contact with the Independence Party.

**MIKLÓS, BÉLA, DÁLNOKI** (1890–1948), Colonel-General. He was commissioned a lieutenant in 1910. After the First World War he served in various places as a member of the General Staff and was military attaché in Berlin from 1933 to 1939. At the time of the Second World War he commanded various military units, and from November 1942 he was Admiral Horthy's adjutant-general and the head of his Military Bureau. From 1 July 1944 he became commander of the First Hungarian Army. After the coup by the Arrow-Cross fascists he went over to the Soviet Army. Until November 1945 he was Prime Minister of the Provisional Government formed on 22 December 1944 in Debrecen. After 1947 he withdrew from politics.

**MOCSÁRY, LAJOS** (1826–1916), politician and publicist. In his pamphlets published in 1858 and 1860 he adopted a position in defence of the rights of the national minorities. In 1861 he was a follower of Deák, and from 1865 a supporter of Kálmán Tisza. In 1874 he was chairman of the Independence Party, one of the rare leaders of the party who endeavoured to moderate nationalist oppression, sought the road to peace with the national minorities and raised his voice against the endeavours to Magyarize them. After he was expelled from his party in 1887, the Rumanian National Party nominated him for parliament in the Karánsebes district (1888). He retired from public life in 1892, but continued active propaganda work. Some of his articles appeared in the bourgeois radical press.

**NAGY, FERENC** (b. 1903), Smallholder politician. At the time of the great depression he was one of the leaders of the growing movement of the propertied

peasants, a founding member of the Independent Smallholders' Party, and from 12 October 1930 its general secretary. He was a representative of the democratic wing of the party. From 1939 he was a parliamentary deputy, and during the war, with government support, he organized the Peasant Federation, of which he became the chairman. He joined the independence movement and was one of the promoters of the alliance with the Social Democratic Party. At the time of the German occupation he was arrested. After liberation he was a member of parliament, and after 22 August 1945 he became chairman of the Independent Smallholders' Party and, together with his group, the party's real director. From May 1945 he was Minister of Reconstruction, and from 29 November 1945 speaker of parliament and chairman of the Supreme National Council. From 2 February 1946 he served as Prime Minister. On 15 April 1947 he travelled to Switzerland and did not return to Hungary. At present he lives in the United States.

**NAGY, IMRE** (1896–1958). During the First World War he became a prisoner of war in Russia where he joined the revolutionary movement of war prisoners. In 1918 he became a member of the Hungarian Group of the Russian Communist (Bolshevik) Party, and took part in the Civil War. In 1921 he returned to Hungary, and between 1925 and 1927 he was a member of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. He went into exile in 1928 to Vienna, and then to the Soviet Union. At the time of the Second World War he was one of the editors of the Kossuth Radio broadcasts in Moscow. At the end of 1944 he returned to Hungary. From December 1944 to November 1945 he held the office of Minister of Agriculture, and until February 1946 he was Minister of the Interior. In 1951 he was Minister of Food, and later Minister for Collecting Agricultural Produce and Livestock. From 1952 he held the post of Deputy Prime Minister, and from July 1953 Prime Minister. In April 1955 he was divested of his party and government offices, and in November he was expelled from the party because of his factionalism. He played a leading role in preparing for the counter-revolution of 1956 and also, during the counter-revolution itself, becoming Prime Minister between 24 October 1956 and 4 November 1956. For this he was sentenced to death in June 1958 and executed.

**PÁZMÁNY, PÉTER** (1570–1637), a Jesuit from a Protestant noble family. He was the Cardinal-Archbishop of Esztergom from 1616. With his polemical essays and political activities he won numerous members of the Protestant Hungarian aristocracy for the Roman Catholic Church, thus laying the foundations for the later victory of the Counter-Reformation. In the Thirty Years War he was one of the foremost supporters of the Habsburg House in Hungary and an enemy of the Principality of Transylvania. At the same time he was a defender of the privileges of the Hungarian nobility. The Hungarian baroque style unfolded for the first time in his influential religious literary works. In 1635 he founded a university at Nagyszombat, which is now the Loránd Eötvös University of Budapest.

**PEYER, KÁROLY** (1881–1956), iron worker, Social Democrat. From 1906 he was one of the leaders of the Iron Workers' Trade Union, and from 1911 he was the Secretary of the Trade Union Council. In 1918 he became the Secretary of the Miners' Trade Union. As the Government Commissioner of the Mining Industry in the Berinkey government, he imposed order among the miners by armed force. He was the Minister of the Interior of the Peidl government, and the Labour and Public Welfare Minister of the Huszár government. The Bethlen–Peyer Pact which turned the Social Democratic Party into the legal opposition of the Horthy regime

is connected with his name. He headed the Social Democratic Party between the two world wars and was the chief policy-maker of the party. After the country's liberation he opposed the fusion of the Social Democratic Party with the Hungarian Communist Party. In 1947 his party expelled him. That year he emigrated and he lived in the United States until his death.

**RAJK, LÁSZLÓ** (1908–1949), teacher. From 1929 he was a student of Hungarian and French at Budapest University. In 1930 he joined in the Communist activities of the university students, as the result of which he was arrested several times and put on trial. He was finally expelled from the university. From 1933 he was a building worker, and carried on propaganda activities as a member of the Young Communist Workers' League. He was a member of the Communist faction of the National Federation of Hungarian Building Workers (MÉMOSZ), and became its leader. He was one of the chief organizers of the strike of building workers in 1935. In 1936 he went to Czechoslovakia, and from there to Spain in 1937. He took part in the Spanish Civil War as the party secretary of the Hungarian Battalion of the International Brigade. After the defeat of the Spanish Republic he was interned in France. He escaped in 1941 and returned to Hungary where he was interned again. He was released in September 1944. He became a secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party's Central Committee, and one of the leaders of the Hungarian Front. He was arrested again, taken to Sopronkőhida and then to Germany. He returned home in May 1945. From 1945 to 1949 he was a member of the Central Committee and Political Committee of the Hungarian Communist Party. From 1945 to March 1946, he was the Secretary of the Budapest Regional Committee of the party, and then Deputy General Secretary. From 1946 to 1948 he was Minister of the Interior and from August 1948 Foreign Minister. In 1949 he became the General Secretary of the Hungarian Independence People's Front. In May 1949 he was unlawfully arrested on the basis of fabricated charges and tried and executed. He was rehabilitated in 1955.

**RÁDAY, PÁL** (1677–1733). Protestant nobleman and county official. From 1703 he was the secretary of Ferenc Rákóczi II and responsible for diplomatic affairs in connection with the liberation struggle. After winning an amnesty in 1711, he played an important political role as a member of the diet from Pest County and as a spokesman of Protestant interests. He took part in the diet's reorganization of the country's political and economic life. He supported various cultural activities, and at his baroque castle in Pécel he brought into existence the first significant collection of books published in Hungarian. His writings (poems and autobiography) were also important.

**RÁKÓCZI, FERENC II** (1676–1735), son of Ferenc Rákóczi I, nominal Prince of Transylvania, and Ilona Zrínyi. In 1686 he was taken from his mother—who was imprisoned—and reared in Bohemia under the supervision of the Vienna court. Returning home to his estate in Hungary in 1694, he came under the influence of aristocratic and gentry circles who were dissatisfied with Habsburg rule. He organized an insurrection with French assistance, but was captured in 1701. From his prison he escaped to Poland where he launched the liberation struggle linked with his name. In 1704 he was elected Prince of Transylvania, and in 1705 the ruling prince of the confederation of insurgent Hungarian nobles. At first he sought for a compromise with the Habsburgs comprising the restoration of the self-government of the Hungarian nobility under the guarantee of an independent Prin-

cipality of Transylvania, but since this proved fruitless, after 1707 he fought for an independent Hungarian kingdom with French, Prussian, and then Russian assistance. After the defeat of the fight for independence, he endeavoured to obtain assistance in exile in Poland until 1712, in France until 1717 and finally in Turkey, but without success. He was an able military and economic organizer, but a mediocre military leader. His literary works in French, Latin and Hungarian (memoirs, confessions) reflected a versatile, modern culture and originality.

**RÁKÓCZI, GYÖRGY I** (1593–1648), son of Zsigmond Rákóczi, Prince of Transylvania, big landowner of eastern Hungary, follower of Gábor Bethlen. In 1630 he succeeded his father to the throne of the Principality of Transylvania. In his economic and church policy he was a conservative, and even on the throne he was primarily a landlord interested in increasing the family estate. He was an enthusiastic pioneer in the struggle of the Protestant cause, but he organized an Anglican type of episcopal state church that was hostile to the Puritan movement. The gains of the Counter-Reformation in Hungary induced him to ensure the freedom of religious conscience to the Catholic landlords' Protestant serfs at the Peace of Linz (1645), as the result of his intervention in the Thirty Years War on the side of Sweden.

**RÁKOSI, MÁTYÁS** (1892–1971), participated in the labour movement from 1910 and was a member of the Galileo Circle. At the time of the First World War he became a Russian prisoner of war, and participated in the war prisoners' movement. He returned home in May 1918. He joined the Communist Party and became secretary for the provinces. During the Soviet Republic he held various state appointments. On 20 July 1919 he was appointed the National Commander of the Red Guard. After the downfall of the Soviet Republic he emigrated to Vienna, and then went to the Soviet Union. In 1920 and 1924 he was an associate of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, and later became its secretary. In 1924 he returned to Hungary and led the reorganization of the Hungarian Communist Party. He was arrested in 1925 and sentenced to eight and a half years in prison, but after serving this term he was given a sentence of life imprisonment. At the intervention of the Soviet Union he was freed in 1940 and went to the Soviet Union. From 1941 to 1944 he was the leader of the Hungarian Communist émigrés living there. He returned to Hungary in January 1945. From 1945 to 1956 he was the General Secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party, and then the Hungarian Working People's Party. From 1945 to 1952 he was Minister of State and Deputy Prime Minister. From 1952 to 1953 he was Prime Minister. After establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat he committed serious political mistakes; he promoted the spread of the personality cult and clung to power for himself and his clique. At the meeting of the Central Committee in June 1953, he was criticized for his faults in the building of socialism. In March 1955, on the pretext of fighting against a right-wing deviation, he put forward the demand to revive his sectarian and dogmatic policy. In June 1956, the Central Committee relieved him of his functions as First Secretary. After the counter-revolution his membership was suspended. In 1962 the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party expelled him from the party.

**SÁGVÁRI, ENDRE** (1913–1944), one of the leaders of the underground Young Communist Movement. In 1936 he joined the Social Democratic Party, and participated in the direction of the National Youth Committee. He soon came into



contact with the underground Communist Party, of which he became a member in 1938. From 1940 he was the leader of the National Youth Committee and the organizer of numerous anti-fascist demonstrations. He was also the initiator of worker and peasant youth meetings. In 1942 he went underground. He organized numerous action groups and directed the collecting of arms. He edited *Béke és Szabadság* (Peace and Freedom), the clandestine paper of the Peace Party. He fell in a gun battle against police who were sent out to arrest him on 27 July 1944.

SIGISMUND (of Luxemburg, 1368–1437), the son of Emperor Charles IV, Margrave of Brandenburg. Betrothed to Crown Princess Mary, he grew up in Hungary from 1379. He married Mary in 1385, and was crowned king in 1387. In order to consolidate his power he waged a hopeless struggle against the internecine factions of barons. In 1401 he himself was compelled to enter into a league with the Garai–Cilli faction, into whose hands he placed the actual power of government. It was he who turned Buda into permanent royal seat and had a monumental late-Gothic palace built there. After unsuccessful efforts at centralization by relying on the nobility and the towns, and the failure of his campaigns against the Turks, he neglected Hungary because the Holy Roman Empire (in 1410 he was crowned King of Germany, and in 1433 Emperor), the reform of the Church (the Councils of Constance, 1414–18, and of Basel, 1431–39), and the Hussite Wars (1419–36) tied him down. In 1420 he even allowed Dalmatia to go over to Venice.

(St.) STEPHEN (c. 970–1038). He was the son of the paramount chief Géza and became his successor in 997. His mother was Sarolt, the daughter of the *gyula* of Transylvania. His original name was Vajk, and he was given the name István (Stephen) when he was baptized a Christian. His wife was Giselle, a Bavarian princess. Adalbert of Prague and his pupils reared him to become a Christian ruler. He crushed the rebellion of his pagan relatives and the independent tribal chiefs in the eastern part of the country. He built the Christian church system, issued a book of laws, introduced the minting of money regularly, completed the development of the system of counties, and organized a united feudal Hungarian state. He was crowned its first king in 1000 with a crown received from the pope.

STROMFELD, AURÉL (1878–1927), a colonel on the General Staff who turned revolutionary. In 1918 he was Under Secretary for Defence, and at the time of the Soviet Republic Chief of Staff of the Hungarian Red Army. After the army withdrew from its positions he resigned. After the revolutions he became one of the leaders of the Hungarian Social Democratic left wing, and later joined the Communist Party. He was tried in court several times.

ŠTÚR, ĽUDOVÍT (1815–1856), writer, Slovak nationalist politician. In the 1830s and 1840s he was the leading figure of the Slovak national movement, the awakener of Slovak national consciousness. Because of his activities the Hungarian government authorities dismissed him from his position as a teacher in the Lyceum of Pozsony. In 1845, with government permission, he launched a newspaper which became a forum for the demands of the Slovak national movement and the raising of the Slovak language to literary stature. In May 1848 he was one of the formulators (with Hurbán and Hodža) of the petition of the Slovak meeting at Liptó-szentmiklós. In the autumn of 1848 he organized guerrilla bands against the Hungarian movement on the side of Vienna. After the defeat of the Hungarian

War of Independence—seeing that the hopes behind his pro-Habsburg policy did not materialize—he withdrew from politics.

SZABÓ, ERVIN (1877–1918), an outstanding figure of the socialist labour movement and Marxist theory in Hungary. He studied law. From 1899 he was a junior librarian of the Parliamentary Library, from 1904 a member of the staff of the Municipal Library of Budapest, and the library's director from 1911 till his death. At the same time he was one of the ideological leaders of the radicals' intellectual movement, and from the age of 22 he also participated in the Social Democratic movement. He sharply criticized the opportunism and bureaucracy that had come to dominate the Social Democratic Party, and he resigned from the party and formed a syndicalist group. He translated the works of Marx and Engels into Hungarian and commented on them. He carried on considerable scholarly work and worked out a historical Marxist interpretation of Hungarian bourgeois development. He was a staff member of *Népszava* (The People's Voice) and from 1903 of *Huszadik Század* (Twentieth Century). From 1906 he was a Vice President of the Society for Social Sciences. After the Russian Revolution of 1917 the anti-militarist movement of intellectuals originated among his circle of pupils.

NAGYATÁDI SZABÓ, ISTVÁN (1863–1924), well-to-do peasant of Somogy County, the founder of the Nagyatádi Smallholders' Party (National Independence and 1848 Farmers' Party, 1909). Between 18 January 1919 and 21 March 1919 he was Minister without Portfolio, then Minister of Economics of the Berinkey government. At the time of the Soviet Republic he withdrew to his native village. After the counter-revolution came to power, from 15 August 1919 almost up to his death, with brief interruptions, he was Minister of Agriculture. He abandoned the peasantry's democratic strivings, and, fusing the Smallholders' Party with the Christian National Union Party on 5 January 1922 as the United Party, turned it into the mass basis of the counter-revolutionary regime. The so-called Nagyatádi Land Reform (of 7 December 1920), which yielded so little to the peasant masses, is linked with his name.

SZÁLASI, FERENC (1897–1946), major on the General Staff, head of the Hungarian Arrow-Cross movement. In 1930 he became a member of the Hungarian Life Association, a clandestine racialist society. In his 'Plan for the Building of the Hungarian State' published in 1933, he laid the foundations of his ideology of Hungarian fascism. He was retired from military service in 1935, and in March that year he founded the fascist party named the Party of the Nation's Will, and in the autumn of 1937, uniting several fascist groups, he formed the Hungarian National Socialist Party. The party was banned on 21 February 1938, and Szálasi was placed under police surveillance. On 16 August 1938, he was sentenced to three years in prison for incitement against the state. On 16 September 1940, he was pardoned under an amnesty and released. From 1 October 1940, he was the leader of the Arrow-Cross Party. After Horthy's unsuccessful attempt to withdraw from the war the Regent appointed Szálasi Prime Minister on 16 October under pressure from the Germans. Szálasi gave himself the title: 'the Nation's Leader' and established a regime of total fascism. This marked the beginning of the reign of terror of the Arrow-Cross gangs which completed the country's ruin. In 1946, the people's tribunal sentenced Szálasi to death as a war criminal and he was executed.



SZAMUELY, TIBOR (1890–1919), journalist, a member of the Social Democratic Party from 1908. In 1915 he became a prisoner of war in Russia. He took part in the October Revolution, was one of the leaders of the Hungarian Communist prisoners of war and the organizer of the international battalion of the Soviet Red Army. He returned to Budapest in January 1919. He was a member of the leadership of the Communist Party of Hungary. At the time of the Soviet Republic he served in several posts as People's Commissar, and led the fight against the counter-revolution. At the news that the Revolutionary Governing Council had resigned, he committed suicide at the Hungarian–Austrian border.

SZÁNTÓ KOVÁCS, JÁNOS (1857–1908), agricultural labourer, one of the leaders of the agrarian socialist movement, the chairman of the General Workers' Reading Society of Hódmezővásárhely. To suppress the local organization of agricultural labourers, the police arrested him in 1894. In protest against this repressive action, crowds of people besieged the town hall on 22 April. Troops were called to put an end to the 'Hódmezővásárhely insurrection'. The court sentenced Szántó-Kovács to five years in prison. His courageous stand in court had a great influence on his contemporaries. After his release from prison he participated in the Social Democratic agricultural workers' movement.

SZÉCHENYI, ISTVÁN, COUNT (1791–1860), great landowning aristocrat and reformer. In his youth he took part in the wars against Napoleon. He travelled widely in Western Europe, and under the influence of his experiences he decided to devote his life to helping his country overcome its backwardness. He sought to win the big landowning aristocracy to his cause. With his practical and theoretical activities he paved the way for the Hungarian reform movement of the 1830s. He hoped to bring about the country's bourgeois transformation in agreement with the Habsburg government. By the beginning of the 1840s, he was frightened by the movement he had launched, which was being developed further by Lajos Kossuth and his radical and liberal associates. He feared the revolutionary tide of the spring of 1848, but welcomed with sincere joy the victory of the bloodless revolution in Pest. He became the Minister of Transport and Public Works of the Batthyány government, but the sharpening conflict between Vienna and the Hungarian government was more than his unsettled nerves could stand. In September 1848 he went to the neurological clinic of Döbling (near Vienna) where he underwent treatment for many years. At the end of the 1850s he wrote the most merciless criticism of the system of absolutism built after the defeat of the revolution. He chose suicide to escape the frequent molestations of the police after the publication of his views.

SZÉLL, KÁLMÁN (1843–1915), landowner and politician. An intimate associate of Ferenc Deák, he was a member of parliament from 1867. Between 1875 and 1878 he was Minister of Finance; owing to the financial difficulties caused by the occupation of Bosnia he resigned and became the board president of the Mortgage and Credit Bank and the Discount Bank. From February 1899 to June 1903 he was Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior. On the basis of an agreement with the leaders of the opposition he established a political consolidation that lasted for several years. He extended the economic compromise with Austria in 1899, and renewed the agreement in 1902. In May 1903, in the course of the army debate, obstructionist tactics brought about his downfall. In 1905 he was a member

of the Andrassy group, and under the Coalition government he was the chairman of the Constitutional Party.

SZENDE, PÁL (1879–1935), economist, publicist, politician, one of the leading figures of Hungarian bourgeois radicalism. He was the general secretary of the Hungarian National Chamber of Commerce (OMKE). He was a contributor to the radical periodical *Huszadik Század* (Twentieth Century), and participated in the founding of the Society for the Social Sciences and later the Bourgeois Radical Party. In his scholarly and journalistic writings he criticized the vestiges of feudalism and conservative trends in the country. After 31 October 1918, he was Under Secretary of State for Finance, and between November 1918 and March 1919 Minister of Finance. In May 1919, he emigrated to Vienna and joined a left-wing Social Democratic emigré group. His Marxist theoretical work during his years in exile was significant.

SZTÓJAY, DÖME (1883–1946) first followed a career as a military officer, and reached the rank of lieutenant-general. Between 1927 and 1933 he was military attaché, then from 1935 Hungary's minister in Berlin. In his foreign policy he was a supporter of unconditional co-operation with the Germans. He became the Hungarian Prime Minister after the German occupation (22 March 1944 to 29 August 1944). He fulfilled the demands of the Germans in every respect, tolerating the activities of the Gestapo in Hungary and the deportation of the Hungarian Jewish population to German death camps. After Rumania's withdrawal from the war (23 August), the ruling circles, taking advantage of the confusion among the Germans, made him resign. As one of the chief war criminals the people's tribunal sentenced him to death, and he was executed.

TÁNCSEICS, MIHÁLY (1799–1884), writer, publicist and politician. Until the age of 20 he worked as a serf, then became a weaver. He was self-taught, and travelled over Europe. He was the first in Hungary to demand the emancipation of the serfs without compensation (1846). He was imprisoned because of his writings, until the revolution of March 15, 1848 liberated him. In 1848 and 1849 he was a member of the parliament, and in his paper, *Munkások Újsága* (Workers' Journal), he demanded the expropriation of the big estates. After the defeat of the War of Independence he was sentenced to death *in contumaciam*. For eight years he went underground and spread illegal leaflets. He escaped only after the Compromise with Austria but he was nearly blind. In 1869 he became a member of Parliament and editor of the workers' paper *Aranytrombita* (Golden Trumpet), and then the chairman of the General Workers' Association. He retired after 1870 and wrote only a few articles for the workers' press.

TELEKI, LÁSZLÓ, COUNT (1811–1861), politician. He was the son of an old Transylvanian aristocratic family. At the dict of the Reform Era he supported Kossuth. He was one of the leaders of the opposition among the aristocracy. In 1844 he was the chairman of the Protectionist Society to promote domestic industry, and in 1848, of the Opposition Circle. From September 1848 he was the Hungarian government's minister to Paris. After 1849 he was in contact with the left wing of French political circles and leaders of the Eastern European emigrés. Already in 1849 he urged the recognition of equal rights for national minorities and pace with them. Later he proclaimed the idea of a Danube Confederation. In 1852 he was hanged in effigy. In 1859–60 he was a member of the emigrés'

Hungarian National Directorate. In Dresden the police arrested him in 1860 and extradited him to Austria. There he was conditionally set free. In 1861 he was elected to parliament, where he was the leader of the so-called Resolution Party. On the day before a decisive vote he ended his life.

TELEKI, PÁL, COUNT (1879–1941), big landowner, one of the leading politicians of the counter-revolution, geographer, university professor and member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He participated in the overthrow of the Soviet Republic and was the Foreign Minister of the Szeged government. In 1920 he was a member of the Trianon peace delegation. At the time of his first term as Prime Minister, from 19 July 1920 to 14 April 1921, he introduced bills for the *numerus clausus*, and the institution of the title of *vitéz* (valorous). His name was compromised in the abortive royalist coups and the fraudulent printing of franc notes. After his resignation he carried on extensive social and scientific activities (head of the Boy Scout movement, chairman of the Federation of Social Societies, etc.). In 1938 he accepted a portfolio in the Imrédy government, and after its downfall he was appointed Prime Minister (16 February 1939 to 3 April 1941). His government adopted the second Anti-Jewish law and joined the Anti-Comintern Pact; nevertheless, at the outbreak of the Second World War he assumed a standpoint of armed neutrality and endeavoured to convince Britain that Hungary was co-operating with Germany only from compulsion. In 1941 his government ratified the Treaty of Eternal Friendship with Yugoslavia. He refused to assume any responsibility for participation in Germany's aggression against Yugoslavia and committed suicide on 3 April 1941.

THÖKÖLY, IMRE, COUNT (1657–1705), big landowner of northern Hungary. In 1670 he fled to Transylvania from the imperial troops who had occupied his father's castles as a result of his participation in the aristocracy's anti-Habsburg conspiracy. In Transylvania he took over command of the *kuruc* forces in 1677, and with French and Turkish support he occupied northern Hungary in 1678, where he was elected Reigning Prince. After 1683, because of the successes of the anti-Turkish liberation war, the *kuruc* camp withered away, and Thököly himself became more and more the leader of a mercenary troop. In 1690 for a short time he acquired the crown of the Principality of Transylvania, but he was soon forced out of the country and lived in exile in Turkey after 1699.

TISZA, ISTVÁN, COUNT (1861–1918), politician. The son of Kálmán Tisza. After his studies in law and economics he held minor offices in the Interior Ministry and the county organization. From 1886 he was a member of parliament. In 1897 the king granted him the title of count earned by his uncle. For a decade beginning in 1890 he was the president of the Hungarian Industrial and Commercial Bank. Between November 1903 and June 1905 he served as Prime Minister. As an advocate of the preservation of Dualism without any changes, he endeavoured, in the autumn of 1904, to put an end to parliamentary obstruction tactics by force, and by this act he brought about the downfall of his government. In February 1910 he founded the Party of National Work. From May 1912, he was Speaker of the House, and from June 1913 to June 1917 he was Prime Minister. For a time, from the beginning of June 1914, he opposed the launching of the war against Serbia, then changed his views and became a supporter of the war and one of its chief political leaders. After his resignation he went to the front, but he kept the leadership of his party. He was killed by soldiers at the outbreak of the revolution.

TISZA, KÁLMÁN (1830–1902), politician, big landowner in Bihar County. In 1848 he held a post in the Batthyány government's Ministry of Religion and Public Education. After the failure of the War of Independence he went into exile. In 1861 he was a representative in parliament. After his uncle László Teleki's suicide, he became the leader of the Resolution Party. From 1865, together with Kálmán Ghyecz, he was leader of the left-centre. Abandoning his opposition programme, in March 1875 he established the Liberal Party through the fusion of the left-centre and the government party. After the fusion he was first Minister of the Interior, then, between October 1875 and March 1890, Prime Minister. The consolidation of Dualism in its final form took place during his term of office as Prime Minister. As the influential leader of the government party he continued to play an active role in politics even after his government fell.

VÁRKONYI, ISTVÁN (1852–1916), agricultural labourer and politician. From 1888 he was a member of the Hungarian General Workers' Party, and in 1896 he was a member of the executive body of the Social Democratic Party. In 1897 at Cegléd he founded the Independent Socialist Party which was based on the poor peasantry. This party demanded in its programme that the government lease all the treasury and Church estates and all properties over 100 *hold* to small peasants in the form of small plots, and it demanded a progressive taxing system. In 1898 he was arrested and imprisoned. From 1905 he was in contact with András Achim, and a large majority of his supporters joined the Peasant Party. He retired from politics before the First World War.

VITÉZ, JÁNOS (c. 1408–1472) came from a noble family in southern Hungary. Around 1433 he was a clerk in the chancery of King Sigismund, and in 1439 became the chief clerk of that office. As a supporter of János Hunyadi's faction, in 1445 he became Bishop of Várad, Chancellor in 1453 and Archbishop of Esztergom in 1465. In opposition to the oligarchy of the barons he was an influential supporter of the alliance between the royal power and the nobility, also of political centralization and the war against the Turks. He was one of the pioneers of humanism in Hungary and one of its earliest patrons, an outstanding orator and letter writer. In 1470, because church influence and the war against the Turks had been relegated to the background, he broke with King Matthias. Moreover, he even organized a plot against his former pupil. Shortly after his release from a brief confinement in prison he died.

WEKERLE, SÁNDOR (1848–1921) emerged from a middle-class family to become one of the leading politicians of his time. From 1870 he held an appointment in the Ministry of Finance. In 1887 he was an Under Secretary of State, and from 1889 to 1895, 1906 and 1917–8 he served as Minister of Finance. He was the most significant financial expert of the era. He balanced the state budget and in 1892 introduced a gold currency. Between November 1892 and January 1895 he was Prime Minister. He played a major role in the adoption of a liberal Church-State reform. From 1896, as president of the Administrative Court, he withdrew from politics for a time. In April 1906, owing to the support he enjoyed among the opposition parties and the confidence of the Vienna court, he was appointed the head of the Coalition government and endeavoured to govern by compromise between the parties. After the downfall of the Coalition government in 1910 he remained a member of the moderate opposition. At the time of his third term as

Prime Minister, between August 1917 and October 1918, he supported the continuation of the war.

WERBŐCZY, ISTVÁN (c. 1485–1541), lawyer of noble birth. From 1505 he was the leading spokesman of the opposition among the nobles and of the Zápolyai faction at the diet. In 1516 he was appointed Chief Justice (representing the king in the highest court) and for a short time in 1525 he was the palatine. After 1526 he became János Zápolyai's Chancellor. After the fall of Buda the Sultan appointed him the Lord Chief Justice of the Hungarian population under Turkish rule. His political career was characterized by xenophobic demagoguery and corruption and endeavours to suppress the bourgeoisie and the peasantry. His major work, *Opus Tripartitum Juris Consuetudinarii Hungariae* (1514), compiled with great legal erudition and codifying the privileges of the nobility and the perpetual serfdom of the peasantry, enjoyed unenviable prestige for centuries.

WESSELÉNYI, MIKLÓS, BARON (1796–1850), big landowner of Transylvania and liberal reform politician, a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. At the turn of the 1820s and 1830s he was Széchenyi's friend and comrade-in-arms, and not long afterwards one of the outstanding leaders of the liberal opposition in the Hungarian and Transylvanian diets. At the time of the great flood in Pest in 1838 he was the legendary boatman and rescuer of many victims. Because of his political activities and views he was accused of treason and imprisoned in 1839. Owing to an eye disease he lost his sight and emerged from his confinement a 'political corpse', and so was unable to play an important role during 1848 and 1849.

ZÁPOLYAI, JÁNOS (1487–1540), the son of the Palatine István and Princess Hedwig of Teschen. From 1510 he was voivode of Transylvania. In opposition to the Jagiello kings and their Habsburg supporters he was the leader of the nobles' 'national' faction and their candidate for the throne. He was elected king in 1526, but he was only able to maintain his throne against Ferdinand of Habsburg in one part of the country by placing himself under the protection of the Turkish Sultan in 1528. But with this he opened the way to the Turkish conquest. His wife was Isabella Jagiello, a Polish princess.

ZRÍNYI, ILONA (1643–1703), the wife of Ferenc Rákóczi I from 1667, of Imre Thököly from 1681. She was a devoted supporter of the *kuruc* movement, and the heroic defender for three years of its last stronghold, the castle of Munkács. From 1688 she was in Habsburg captivity, but in 1692 she was exchanged for a captured imperial general and was allowed to follow her husband, Imre Thököly, into exile in Turkey.

ZRÍNYI, MIKLÓS (c. 1508–1566), a Croatian aristocrat who settled on an estate at Csáktornya that was granted to him for his military exploits and founded the Hungarian branch of his family. He was an aggressive robber knight bent on increasing his properties and a hero of the Turkish wars. He was a typical representative of the double-dealing Hungarian aristocracy of his times. In 1545 he was *bán* of Croatia, then commander-in-chief of armed forces in Transdanubia. Although he resigned from these offices because of his differences with the Viennese military leadership, in 1561 he undertook the command of the fortress of Szigetvár. After a resolute defence of the fortress in 1566, he and the remains of the garrison made

a sally against the Turkish forces who were besieging the fortress under the Sultan's personal command and he fell in the hand-to-hand battle.

ZRÍNYI, MIKLÓS (1620–1664), great-grandson of the hero of Szigetvár, and also his successor in his office of *bán* of Croatia. He was a pupil of Péter Pázmány, but even more a product of Italian baroque culture, with which he became acquainted on his travels in Italy. He took possession of his estate while only a youth, and had to fight constant battles against the Turks to protect them. Turning against the Vienna government's weak Turkish policy, from 1655 he assumed the leadership of the 'national' party which aimed at protecting the self-government of the nobles from absolutist aspirations, and sought to have the Prince of Transylvania elected King of Hungary. After the Turkish invasion of Transylvania he endeavoured to unite the Habsburg court and the Hungarian nobility as an effective force against the Turks, but during the Turkish attack of 1663–4 he did not obtain sufficient support from either side: moreover, the imperial government did not allow him to assume a leading military role because it regarded him as the chief obstacle to the peace it desired to conclude with the Turks. After the Peace of Vasvár he retired in disappointment to his estate at Csáktornya, where he suffered a fatal hunting accident. He used his outstanding talents as a writer in the service of his political objectives. In his epic poem *Siget Disaster*, the most important work of Hungarian literature of that century, he wrote of the heroic exploits of his great-grandfather. In his writings on military science and political leaflets, written in a soaring baroque style, he called for support in the battles against the Turks.

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## \* ABBREVIATIONS

AH Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae  
AnnUB Annales Universitatis Scientiarum Budapestiensis de Rolando Eötvös  
nominatae  
AUD Acta Universitatis Debreceniensis de Ludovico Kossuth nominatae  
Bp. Budapest

*Études historiques* Études historiques publiées à l'occasion du XIII<sup>e</sup> Congrès International des Sciences Historiques par la Commission Nationale des Historiens Hongrois, I-II. Bp. 1970.

NEH Nouvelles études historiques publiées à l'occasion du XII<sup>e</sup> Congrès International des Sciences Historiques par la Commission Nationale des Historiens Hongrois, I-II. Bp. 1965.

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